Encounter

Mr Curtis

September 1972 35p

Short Story
Frank Tuohy

2 LETTERS:
France
James Morris
Zanzibar
David Holden

Hospital
Henry Miller

The Quest for Meaning
Raymond Aron

»Sayings«
Leo Rosten

ARGUING ON THE BOX
with James Baldwin et al.

PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE

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YEARS OF INTELLECTUAL HAVOC

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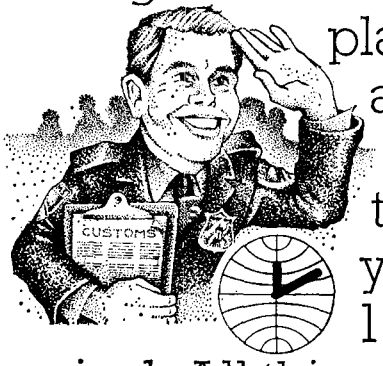

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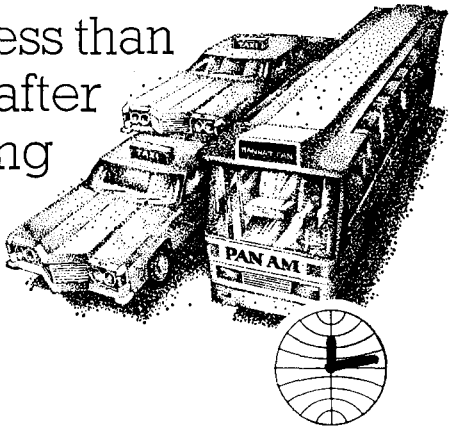

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Encounter

SEPTEMBER 1972

VOL. XXXIX NO. 3

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Frank Tuohy

The White Stick

A PLATFORM on the District line outside London, in the fine-drawn drizzle of a January morning. No place for the infirm of purpose. Unless you have effective prayers to mutter, it is better to be sure of your destination. Few of those waiting look as if they enjoyed this certainty.

An exception, though, is Nigel Griffin, aged about thirty, with longish hair, wearing a sheepskin coat and carrying a leather holdall. From his untidy yet somehow expensive appearance, one might conclude that he does not live in London, and also that he is not competing in the ordinary worlds of commerce or administration. Both these conclusions are correct. Griffin's wife has money; they live in an Old Rectory in the west country and have two children. The previous day he has signed a contract for a new book and has visited the London Library. He has just been spending the night at his sister's house in Richmond. In three quarters of an hour, his train will leave Paddington. Camilla will be waiting for him in the car, with their younger son strapped, moist and slithery, into his harnessed seat behind her. For the Griffins the world is often inconvenient and mismanaged (au pair girls hate to live in the country, workmen fail to turn up after all their promises to Camilla, Griffin's books sell fewer copies than anybody admits) but they are comfortable, worried and happy.

Griffin stares across the railway line at an advertisement for Men's Toiletries. Some people, whose anxieties have almost dissevered them from the corporeal world, stare straight through hoardings as though into an invisible gulf beyond. When the train arrives, you expect them to fall in front of it. Yet somehow they step on to it all the same. Griffin is quite different: he sees the world around him for what it is.

FOR EXAMPLE, and purely for the purpose of checking, here is a girl approaching along the platform. Griffin would notice her in any case, because her face is a surprise, being very pale and almost beautiful, and her dark chestnut hair is unfurled down to her shoulders. Vulgarity, in the tall hair-dos and prancing bottoms of working-class girls, never attracts him. But he finds this romantic, pre-Raphaelite look sharply moving, perhaps because its frame is so unexpected. Why should a girl like this be wearing, even though in a slovenly, uncommitted fashion, the uniform and peaked cap of a London Transport employee?

An old man is holding on to her arm. He is swinging a white stick from side to side. The girl keeps up an animated conversation with him while they proceed up the platform. The blind man answers briefly, impatiently. He is accustomed to making use of people's kindness. Of course, he is receiving an additional benefit he is quite unaware of: he cannot see how pretty the girl is.

Griffin is standing by himself. With dismay he observes the girl's questing look. She is propelling her companion directly towards him. Griffin would like to take evasive action, but immediately he tells himself that this is impermissible. Unflinching, he holds his ground.

"Do you mind, sir, helping him into the second carriage from the front? It's a smoker and he likes to smoke."

She smiles at him charmingly. Her menial situation is at once explained by her voice. She is Irish. Griffin, though partly Irish himself, is reminded of the fact that we increasingly depend on a population of *untermensch.* After a century or so of industrial progress, he wonders, do we all hate too much to be

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able to look after one another? It could bear looking into.

"You'll be all right with this gentleman, my dear."

"Thank you."

Griffin emerges from his argument with himself and begins exchanging remarks which concern the weather. From these he learns that the blind man, too, is from outside. Probably East European, Polish or Jewish.

Griffin tries not to think that this knowledge can affect their encounter in any way. But it does. He begins to have the surely justifiable feeling that, by agreeing to help, he is correcting an imbalance in the world. Perhaps he is even compensating for some innate meanness of spirit he finds in himself and his friends. For people of his own comfortable circumstances, Griffin thinks, being English has always meant that we never took part unless we were giving the orders. Even then we chose to be voluntary spectators, who could get out whenever we wanted. Griffin is standing beside someone who has never given the orders; who, at a guess, has suffered because he did not get out in time.

"You see, I am not used to make this trip. I was one time living at Edgware. Now I am coming down here. The changing at Earl's Court is difficult to me."

"I can help you, then." Griffin commits himself further by continuing: "I change at Earl's Court too. I'm going to Paddington."

"That is good, then. We are taking the same train both times."

The pupils of the blind man's eyes are just visible under the half-closed lids, and he turns towards Griffin as he speaks. This may show that his affliction is recent, or that some sight persists. It lends him humanity; he is not merely a voice speaking out of a wall of darkness.

THE TRAIN RUMBLES to a halt in front of them. Griffin secures his bag in his left hand and takes hold of his companion, gently steering him towards the opened doors. The ferrule of the white stick, a rod for divining the solidity of the world, taps up and down, jumps excitedly and lands on the sill of the train.

"There's a seat on the left," Griffin says.

All the other passengers are solitaries, morose in their inactivity. Now Griffin is grateful for the old man's presence. He is giving him a chance to act, to be useful, to be good.

"I want smoke. You have light?"

"No, I'm afraid I don't smoke."

Griffin appeals to one of the other passengers. This man hands over a cheap lighter which Griffin is unable to activate. There is a fussy moment or two before he can steer the flame against the cigarette which juts from the blind man's mouth.

Embarrassed by his incompetence, Griffin restores the lighter to its owner.

He has the odd impression that the other passengers ought somehow to be cooperating in his good action, or at least in some way commending him for it. A sudden fantasy grips him, in which their stares are cynical and contemptuous. They all know the old man is a fraud, not blind at all, and that this stiff-necked outsider is being made a fool of. Whenever Griffin comes up to London he gets ideas like this. Without minding about it too much, he realises that he has become unfitted for metropolitan life. The smallest incidents upset him and he exists in anguish until the time comes to return to the Old Rectory, to Camilla and the children.

The blind man has begun talking again. He is commending Griffin for not smoking. There is a girl in his office, he says, lovely girl, only twenty-eight, yet she smokes three packets a day. Often she says she would not go out to work at all, only she needs the money for smokes. Just imagine it!

Griffin is aware of having heard of this girl before. She seems to have been employed in half the offices in London. The old man's voice betrays the peculiar shocked avidness with which the girl is usually mentioned: it is as though she were guilty of accommodating the whole board of directors during her lunch hour.

For himself, though, the blind man tells Griffin, smoking is one of his few pleasures. That, and the radio. Classical music, of course.

While he is talking, the ash of his cigarette falls and crumbles on the front of his overcoat. Griffin wonders whether it is part of his job to dust him down. Suddenly however a

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withered hand comes up and shakes the front of the coat clean. The awareness that this suggests is a bit disconcerting. It indicates in the blind man an insistent will, pushing at the borders of darkness.

In addition, he recites the name of each station as the train stops. He is always correct. At Earl's Court, he announces, the other train will be waiting. And, without a doubt, there it is.

This sort of thing never happens to Griffin. The working intelligentsia, the class in which he mockingly includes himself, can never give the material world its proper meed of attention. It keeps taking its revenge on them for this. The blind man can conjure up trains, whereas Griffin himself has the greatest difficulty in catching one.

Then, as though to throw doubt on all this, the train opposite stirs a little, threatening to leave without them. But it merely seems to be easing itself into a more comfortable position. Griffin has moved into action, again gripping his bag in his left hand and steering the old man with his right. Again the white stick ticks away, as though it had discovered precious metal in the black concrete under their feet, and in a moment they are across the platform and installed in the new train. They sit side by side, panting a little. Thanks to Griffin, all is well.

THEN ABRUPTLY the whole pleasant picture disintegrates.

The blind man clutches his sides with his hands and shouts out: "My briefcase!"

"Briefcase?"

"It is on the other train. Hurry!"

Griffin steps back on to the platform in time to see the first train sliding away.

He returns to find his companion in a state of shock.

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" These hopelessly weak words of protest show that the old man is unused to employing English in situations of chagrin or despair. Soon he is muttering in another language, Polish or Yiddish.

Griffin watches him with apprehension. He is fairly sure that in a moment or two the blind man will start accusing him. For him, it would be the natural thing to do. He remembers the pretty Irish girl at Richmond. She would not have let the blind man down. Nor would Camilla. Women excel at such small responsibilities.

"What train was it? Where was it going?"

"Tower Hill."

"Oh dear, oh dear. Many stations for stopping. Somebody will take my briefcase."

Griffin can think of nothing helpful to say. He is dumbfounded by his inadequacy.

The old man mutters a little and goes on: "Already I lost one umbrella on this train. I telephone and telephone again, and after one week they are still saying, 'No, it has not arrived yet.' A new umbrella, mind you. And now, my briefcase."

"Were there important papers in it?"

"Papers? What papers? It was good leather, I tell you, not so new, but good."

"Perhaps they will find out who it belongs to, from the papers in it."

The blind man is not listening. "Aie, aie. The same thing was happening with one pair of gloves, quite new."

This list is beginning to preclude sympathy. To warm his feelings up again, Griffin tries to imagine the distance between Richmond and Bayswater, where the old man is getting off, as a dark corridor full of angles. But warmth of feeling is no use now. In a few moments the train will arrive at Bayswater. How can Griffin recover his good action in time?

It is impossible. The old man has fallen into the hands of a false Samaritan. What he needed was one of those types whom Nature designed to take charge at awkward moments: men who organise streams of traffic after a mishap on the road; who guide articulated lorries into the narrowest of turnings; who, ambulant in dressing-gowns, assume control in the public wards of hospitals.

BAYSWATER STATION. For the last time (the encounter seems to have been going on for hours) Griffin helps the old man to his feet. He does this with a little less care, perhaps, for his assistance is now completely devalued. To recover anything, Griffin would have to lead the blind man up the stairs and out into the street. This would mean losing his own train at Paddington, Camilla would be kept waiting another hour, and Marcus would miss his afternoon sleep. One should be careful before embarking upon good

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actions. Egoism is better: at least you do no damage.

And now Griffin is launching the blind man on to emptiness, like a little blank-faced owl which cannot fly. They shake hands. They cannot say they are pleased to have met each other, because it is not true.

On the Bayswater platform, the blind man stands alone. But only for about ten seconds. The tapping of the white stick immediately attracts the attention of a man who has got off the same train. Wearing a blue anorak, with spectacles and a cruel hair cut, he looks like a schoolmaster. Obviously this is the right guide to take charge of the blind man and lead him wherever it is he wants to go. Griffin slinks back into the carriage. He remains standing until the train reaches Paddington.

He is feeling a bit battered by the whole business. Yet his mind still makes retrospective efforts to help or atone. He tries to imagine the lost briefcase, to conjure it into existence again. First of all he summons up the pretty Irish girl, approaching down the platform towards him. He can see the girl's pale skin and her uncoiled hair. And there is the old man, with his white stick held in his right hand, searching to and fro. His left arm is linked to the girl. How can he be carrying a briefcase? Quite clearly, he has left it at home.

Griffin tries peering more closely at this image that he has resurrected. Can't he just make out the briefcase, wedged in some fashion under the arm that is holding the white stick? No, he cannot. At least, he is not going to attempt it. Or is the girl perhaps holding it in her free hand, ready to give it back to the old man? Griffin's imagination fails to get beyond the girl's face, and he is content to let it fail. The exercise is over. He has given his imagination sufficient leash for it to retrieve his honour. What it has brought back in its slack jaws is not much, but it is something. It will have to be enough.

WHILE THINKING in this way, Griffin has proceeded, without noticing, right across Paddington Station, through the ticket barrier and on to the platform, where the train for the west is waiting. He has already bought the weekly reviews. He easily secures a corner seat in a first-class carriage. He has only to sit back now, to be delivered to his family. London lies behind him, the city of confusion, where the advertisement hoardings hide gulfs, where one walks untrusting and untrustworthy among visible realities, like a blind man down a dark corridor without an end.

Dancing Years

The car that knocked her down
Had notices in its window
—the window he should
Have been looking through.
"Spastics Week"
And another—"The Dancing Years".

All we have now
Is a cabbage and
Concealed tears.

Not even a spastic child
To dance on its stilts
Over ageing years
When we might get used to the idea
To the idea.

Raymond Daniels

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James Morris

A Letter from France

How strange it is that France should be,
Where'ere one wanders, land or sea,
Through climes of Fez, or Clog, or Sporran,
Quite so incomparably Foreign!

Though but a ditch of water stands
Between our amicable lands,
No maelstrom or daemonic ford
Could make the French seem more Abroad.

OLD ENGLISH RHYME

THE FRENCH feel Abroader still if one approaches them by Hovercraft, for no mode of transport is more unmistakably engineered for ultimate journeys. This is how we shall cross the Styx at last, with a swoosh of spray and a rattle of bulkhead doors, looming ungainly and amphibious through the night with Charon high in his pilot-house above us. Irrevocable seems the landing upon the soil of France, if one is deposited there by this momentous device, and irrevocable it very often is, for a slight chop in the sea out there, a gusty wind up the Narrows, and Charon is immobilised in the Port d'Aeroglisseur for hours at a time, and is to be seen morosely reminiscing on a high bar stool in the panoramic restaurant.

I like this utterness of landfall, for I am everybody's patriot, responding with almost equal sympathy to lachrymose Welshmen at rugby matches, Americans with hats on their hearts as parades pass by, inexplicable ceremonials of Swaziland or those sad silent sentries who stand, heads bowed and rifles reversed, so still upon the steps of the Vittorio Emmanuele memorial in Rome. And most of all, since one associates the emotion of patriotism most expressly with the fact of France, do I respond to the proud Frenchness of the French. I do not wish them to be nice to me. Nor do I want them to adapt in any way to the influences of the world outside, however reasonable or enlightened. I want only to feel, now as always, that when I drive away from the port into those melancholy landscapes of Pas-de-Calais, I am entering a world not merely separate and different from my own, but perfectly convinced of its superiority to all others, inviting one simply to take or leave it.

These are archaic preferences. Cosmopolitanism, I know, is the contemporary orthodoxy, and while few people nowadays wish to remould foreign countries in their own image, fewer still, it seems to me, wish nations to remain absolutely themselves. Patriotism has has long been crudely confused with chauvinism, and those who prefer countries ethnically intact run the risk of prosecution under the Race Relations Act, or worse still of being smiled upon by Mr Enoch Powell's supporters. To my mind all this makes for dullness, and excited though I sporadically am by the prospect of a Europe without frontiers, still I am saddened by the process of bumps smoothed, quirks normalised, anomalies rationalised, contrasts homogenised, which they tell me is sure to be a Pan-European concomitant.

So it was with an inner foreboding that I left the hoverport in Boulogne the other day at the start of a short exploratory tour, and drove thoughtfully away towards Paris. I had a nagging feeling that France herself, the true creator of modern Europe, might be compromising her style at last; and I did not like the look of things, when at the motorway café they offered me a

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Choc-Bar and *Poulet Far West*, and forbade me wine for safety's sake.

AT FIRST, THOUGH, I found much to reassure me. People were still walking that special French walk, less loose-limbed than ours, more precise and deliberate, rather as though their legs do not bend at the knee. Traffic cops were still riding their motor-bikes in that particular French posture, hunched far forward over their petrol tanks like so many White Knights and looking as though they too, when discreetly out of sight, might tumble to the ground in a tangle of microphones and report books. Truck drivers, meeting me on the wrong side of the highway with a klaxon cacophony, still melted upon my protestations of self-amused innocence into that cynic half-toss of the head, accompanied by inaudible mutterings, which is an early symptom of French gallantry.

There are still, I found, no mornings like French town mornings, when the bread hangs fragrant upon the awakening air, when the priests converge blackly upon the Cathedral for early mass, and the whine of the mopeds about the Place de la Gare incites the first tourist to throw open her shutters and sip her orange juice in the sunshine. There is still nowhere in the world remotely like your French bourgeois country restaurant, at Sunday lunchtime preferably, when the little town outside is echoing and listless, and the Auberge des Gourmets, or Chez Boudin, or Au Relais de la Chanson, is like an island of warmth and gluttony in a sea of empty cobbles.

I went to one such restaurant, on such an apathetic Sunday, in—well, in one of those ancient towns of central France where the streets wind upwards from the railway track, through scowling walls of medievalism, until they debouch in the square outside the cathedral door, surveyed by huge stone animals through the stone lattice-work of the cathedral tower, and prowled about on Sunday mornings by cats and desultory tourists. Nothing had changed, I discovered, in the corner restaurant, the one with the awnings and the menu in the polished brass frame. It remained quintessential France, as the English have loved and loathed it for several centuries. Madame remained the epitome of everything false, narrow-minded and unreliable. One waiter seemed, as ever, to be some sort of a duke, the other was, of course, the village idiot. At the table next to mine sat a prosperous local family out for Sunday dinner, well-known to the proprietress and esteemed throughout the community—unsmiling, voluminously napkinned, serious and consistent eaters who sometimes, eyeing me out of the corners of their piggy eyes, exchanged in undertones what were doubtless scurrilous sly Anglophobics, before returning sluggishly to their veal.

I do not doubt the bill was wrong. I am sure Madame disliked me as much as I detested her. The veal was, as a matter of fact, rather stringy. But what a contrary delight it all was still! How excellent still the vegetables! How much better the wine in France! How stately that duke! How endearing the idiot! With what real gratitude, evading the final scrutiny of the prefectorial table, and sweetly returning Madame's shifty glittering smile, did I wrap the Frenchness of that café around me like a cloak, and return cherished to the motorway!

IN MOST WAYS, INDEED, at first sight, traditional French life seemed to me as robust as ever. The acolytes swarmed around the celebrant at Chartres like white squires around a champion, while the blues, whites, and golds of the windows cast an eerie and lovely light on the pale faces of his congregation. The labourers at the Louvre lugged their masterpieces from room to room with the jolly disrespect of furniture removers. The vendeuses in the boutiques of St Honoré remained mistresses of that hardest of hard-selling techniques, the technique disinterested—"it is *entirely* up to you," they seemed to be saying, like their mothers before them, "if you think so sophisticated a fabric is *really* your style. . . ." I wandered through the castle at Grimaud in Provence one warm and moonlit evening, with the soft lights of the village below the hill, and the Mediterranean a whispering hiss somewhere out of sight, and felt the old velvety magic no less pungent than of old, however frenzied the traffic on the highway far below, or thickened the scummy water on the beaches of San Tropez. The elderly man who helped me park my car in the garage of the Hotel de la Poste, Corps, Isère, manœuvred me between its pillars with all the old scrupulous concern—a twitch of the fingers there, a roll of the right arm there, until like a conductor reaching the last chord of fulfilment he dropped his arms with a half triumphant, half despairing gesture that told me to turn my ignition off. "Well, we are still the same in some ways," said the old friend at Samöens, where long ago I lived and wrote a

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book, "not much richer, still eating the same soup"—just as he would have answered the same question, I do not doubt, in just the same wry inflexion, with just the same crinkling of the face, with an identical toss of the calvados in its little cut-glass tumbler, if it had been put to him at any time since, say, the turn of the last century.

BUT AS I FEARED, the more I looked, the more differences I sensed. Even Samöens, which was much the same on the surface, had deeply changed beneath, for the old alpine culture of Haute-Savoie is almost dead now, most of the mountain farms are weekend retreats for Genevans, and only rarely does one see that dear familiar of the valley roads, the lady knitting on the green grass while her cows, their bells tinkling in the sweet air, lollop and munch behind her. It was not the specifics of France that seemed different: it was far more the generalities, the atmosphere or the climate of life.

First of all France was, when I thought about it, much younger than it used to be. That lady with the knitting had been, almost by definition, a lady of a certain age, and most of the classic archetypes of France, from the Paris concierge to the Dordogne farmer, were elderly people. Part of the allure of the country was certainly this maturity, which made for the crankiness, the leatheriness, the stubbornness I have always relished there. It used to feel as though the French would never change because by the nature of mortality they would never have time.

Now France feels younger, physically I mean, than any other Western nation I know. Even the bombazine madame at the cash desk, when I looked at her more analytically, seemed half the age she used to be. Those indefatigable wine-breathed farmers are no longer to be seen urging great snorting horses across distant fields. Even the bank manager is likely to be, if you seek his advice about foreign exchange problems, not the foxy and ingratiating bourgeois you are hoping for, but a sleek executive in his early thirties, with a lacquered if plumpish wife, one assumes, and probably a degree in economics. As for the French motorist, who used to chug so endearingly along in a high-rumped corrugated baby Citroen, his cigarette bobbing up and down as he chatted to the companion slumped prickly and expressionless at his side, now he almost invariably travels faster than sound in a futuristic orange blur.

This youngness of France disconcerted me. I had known it was coming, for the French birthrate of the 1940s and 1950s was very high, and I suppose I have unconsciously watched it happening over the years. Even so, when I sat down and considered it, and looked around me at the new faces of the country, I felt taken aback. Nobody alive has ever known a young France before. It is like meeting an elderly aunt in Carnaby Street, shopping around for jeans. It gave me an odd chemical sensation, as though I had touched a new cell formation, artificially achieved in a laboratory.

AND YES, WITH YOUTH has come a new catholicity. There is no denying it. The supermarket, the shopping centre, television, the family car, the deep freezer, Kleenex, all the instruments of universal change have affected France as potently as they have affected all the rest of us. Even the look of the landscape has changed in the past five years or so. France is much better painted nowadays. Its northern villages have thrown off at last that blight of despair which had hung around them like a mist since Verdun and the Marne. Its southern coasts, once so serene and sage-scented, are as gaudily exploited as any Spanish *costa* or Welsh caravan bay. Even Paris, if mostly inviolate in the centre, proliferates on the fringe with high rise blocks and concrete patios. Le Corbusier is dead, and as if awakening from a long bemusement French architecture is throwing off his drear influence, and building more delicately, more airily, with more sense of pleasure and less of social dogma (for if Corbusier originals at least had grandeur, Corbusier copies were mostly baleful frauds).

Everywhere, too, this new young France greets one in Franglais, that hybrid tongue of the advertising men and the trendy young which Academicians so despise, and which more than anything else, I think, disturbed my emotions in France this time. Franglais is inescapable—in *bungalows* or *hot dogs*, *Play Cottages* and *Garden Centers*, *Choc Bars* and *Poulets Far West*. People said I was stuffy when I grumbled, but one cannot live in Wales without knowing that language is truly the substance of nationhood, and that each compromise with a foreign idiom, each adaptation of a catchy foreign phrase, is a whittling away of the national identity. I loathed every symptom of Franglais, and thought I had reached its nadir when, strolling down the Rue de la Paix hardly a stone's

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throw from Opéra, Louvre, and Madeleine, I saw a house advertised in an estate agent's window as being only 25 miles from "Paris—*France*."

ESPECIALLY IN PARIS, FRANCE, I thought I sensed some subduing of the spirit. Is this the lingering impact of Gaullism? Young though the French may be, they do not seem greatly daring. By the standards of Chelsea or California, they are rather sedate. I missed the legendary spark of Paris. Hardly anybody hooted at me, however abysmally I drove. The café bravos of the Left Bank were slumped in their textbooks. Les Halles was dead. Chevalier was buried. A strange sense of gentlemanly tolerance seemed to grip the capital—even the semblance of phlegm, as the rain slanted viciously across the Tuileries, and the coatless Parisiennes, bent double against the summer wind, doggedly pushed their way back to their offices after meagre slimmers' lunches.

Somehow the city seemed *muffled*. Perhaps it is the zoning restrictions, which have kept from the heart of Paris that fairground ostentation so essential to the new London. Perhaps it is the habit of political docility. *Le Monde* was extraordinarily balanced and restrained, set beside the same day's *Times*, and I searched in vain for scrawled slogans of protest, or Sunday demonstrations. Even the policemen of Paris, dreadfully though they may behave in hidden dungeons of the *Sûreté*, look disconcertingly nice—their faces set in expressions of kindly repose, as they twiddle their batons benevolently beside the river, or lean obligingly from the waist to help frail old ladies. For one who, like me, habitually thinks of Paris policemen hunched in leather jackets in riot trucks at dawn, this benign new image comes as a deflationary blow. It gives Paris a feeling of premature fulfilment, as though after war and rebellion, bitterness and repression, it has settled into acceptance at last, and left the outrage, the glitter, and the creativity to others.

THIS IS NO MORE THAN instinct—a sort of metaphysical hearsay. I am really not qualified to say if the standard of thought and spirit in France today is less exciting than it used to be. I can only report a sensation of sterility which the country gave me, rather like the deadened feel of a landscape sprayed with insecticides. France was as kind to me as always, and after a few weeks in Italy, that figure of debasement, seemed to me as ever one of the grand strongholds of civilisation.

Yet it did not fire me this time. I felt no tingle of excitement there, as I do despite myself when I land in New York, or even look out of the GUM windows to see Red Square so awfully below. And when I try to account for this lack of frisson, I put it down chiefly to a fading of *la gloire*. This is not the fault of the French. It is simply that the style of French grandeur is out of date. How bloated and grandiose that black sarcophagus of Napoleon, around whose high vault the pigeons heedlessly flutter, and in whose anti-chambers the Marshals of France lie arrogantly in defeat! How tasteless the immensities of Versailles, corridor upon corridor, battle blurred into battle, the gilt, the ugly mirrors, the superfluity of opulence seeming nowadays less regal than nouveau-riche! The scale of that old France is wrong, and in an age of disposable merit the vast splendours of the French heritage, the acres of pictures and the inexhaustible formality, seem like barren relics of discredited values, not merely pathetic but vulgar too.

Yet they were the true expression of France's patriotism: and as that sense of glorious nationhood weakens, as weaken it must, so France becomes less French. I cannot have it all ways. When I returned to Boulogne at the end of my visit, I told myself that the Hovercraft trip would not be so utter after all. Some of the strangeness had gone out of France, and the French were becoming, for better for worse, a little more like everyone else. "We are all citizens of the world nowadays," as a friend had sententiously observed to me in Paris, hoping I suppose to comfort me, for he did not know my irredentist tendencies. Yet a curious anomaly revived my spirits: for when, with its habitual heavings, seethings and rumblings, the Hovercraft opened its jaws to us on the other shore, and I drove into Dover for tea, good gracious, when I thought about it, what an incorrigibly separate country I found myself in then, how queer its habits, how insular its tastes, how droll its public customs, how complacent its leathery Saxon faces, happily sipping their tea-bag tea, and debating whether to embark upon a macaroon or a synthetic cream slice!

Beyond the sea, beyond the air,
Lies the land called Angleterre,
Dressed in fog and washed in drizzle,
Drunk on slops and fed on gristle,
Oh that we were there! Ma foi!
Oh that we were there!

TRADITIONAL FRENCH SONG

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Leo Rosten

Sayings

I STARTED collecting them when I was six years old. I did not, of course, know that I was becoming an anthologist, nor that I would spend 58 years collecting gems—verbal gems of wit, insight and wisdom, particularly those used and loved by Jews.

I was raised by a mother and father who simply leaped at the chance to utter a folk-saying, in Yiddish, in the day-by-day rearing of their children. And so proverbs, epigrams, maxims, *vitzen* of every conceivable sort were woven into the fabric of my daily life. No aspect of my boyish conduct escaped comment (instruction, chastisement or praise) in the form of an adage. Had I forgotten a chore? Torn my shirt? Not finished my milk?... Was I protesting too much? Excusing too long? Explaining too little?... Had I arrived too late? Left too early? Neglected my homework?... Was I guilty of having given insufficient consideration to a widow, an old man, a beggar, a clerk? Not helped a blind man? Hurried the grocer? Fudged on a promise?... Was I being selfish, stubborn, jealous, vain? Would Mr Becker think me unfriendly or Mrs Feibush unkind, Joey Tiven insensitive or Molly Shulman unjust?

For even the *possibility* of having committed some small but frightful breach of decorum, I heard a mighty precept that might teach me—heir of all the ages—how better to conquer my thoughtlessness or guard my tongue or refine my conduct so that I might one day be worthy to be called a *mensh*. No allowance was made for my tender age, the normal distractions of youth, innocent impulsiveness—all of which received short shrift from my mother, a lady of indomitable will, who sought perfection and discounted my explanations (God forbid they should be *excuses*) for the errors of my boyish ways.

So it was through the proverbs and parables of the Jews that I was introduced into the kingdoms of ethics, reason, psychology, philosophy. The words of ancient sages and scholars poured into my ears—to teach me the imperatives of honour, the nature of responsibility, the ingredients of manners, the dimensions of duty, guilt, shame, self-respect.... I tell you, as I look back on it now, the building of the Pyramids involved no greater complexities of analysis and choice than accompanied the simple business of living out one day in what I can only call the ethical furnace of my home.

Now, the maxims I heard from my mother or father were, of course, not original with them: they were folk-sayings—heard from his or her father, who had heard it from his or her mother, who had heard it from his or her uncle, who was quoting a friend who was only repeating what some rabbi had told him a sage, quoted in the Talmud as "speaking for" another seer, had once said. And *that* patriarch, had my parents known it, was interpreting Hillel or Rabban Gamaliel, who was repeating an adage first heard in Judea or Babylon or Alexandria—and *that* aphorism, for all anyone knows, had been refurbished by some 12th-century scholar in Cordova or some 16th-century mystic in Safed, some 18th-century rabbi in Vilna or some 20th-century *hasid* in Dubno or Berdichev or Brooklyn.

AND THERE WAS ANOTHER bottomless well of folk-wisdom that gushed sweet waters in our Chicago home. Each night, as soon as we finished dinner (we called it "supper"), my father would open the *Daily Forward* (*"Forvitz"* is how it is rendered in Yiddish). How he loved that journal! It served as chronicle, town crier, telephone, movies, radio, television, almanac and encyclopedia, all in one. The news was a daily bazaar of human deeds and follies; a circus of the singular, the fanciful, the brutal, the grotesque; a recessional of the wonders and crimes, the glories and horrors the peculiar race of man each day created.

My father would spread the *Forvitz* across the table under the gas-lamps and would proceed to read; and as he read he would mumble and cluck and sigh, muttering astonishment or approval, marvelling over this miracle or deploring that

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disaster. The most noteworthy items he read aloud to my mother and me; and so, even as a boy, I apprehended snatches of meaning from the reports about the movers and shakers of the world: bread-lines in Warsaw, manoeuvres off Jutland, a brouhaha in Washington, a small pogrom in Rumania, a large one in the Ukraine. . . . To all these reverberations of the great world in our warm little kitchen, my father counterpointed his own commentary—admiration or dismay or disgust, eloquent grunts or scoffing snort, an epiphany of "Mnh!"s and "Mnyeh!"s, shocked "Oy!"s, affirmative "Ai-ai-ai!"s, cynical "Hoo-hah!"s—all replaced, as his Americanisation proceeded, with un-greenhornish "My!"s and "Imagine!"s, "Fakers!" or (in outraged regression) "*Paskudnyaks!*"

When the reading of the news was completed, my father turned to the "*Bintel Brief*" (Bundle of Letters), the "agony column" of Letters to the Editor that was a veritable Vanity Fair: and now I heard about raffish boarders making advances to respectable landladies; consumptive men forced to live on the pittances of in-laws; Socialist seamstresses who lamented their swains' indifference to the Class Struggle; sad tales of lost children, abandoned sweethearts, greedy relatives, unforeseen pregnancies—every conceivable experience that cast fate's harsh shadow across unprepared lives. The *Bintel Brief* threw on to the public stage of print the high hopes and brave dreams, the aching disillusionments and small miseries of life in this shimmering New World to which the immigrant hordes had come.

The letters to the *Forward* often asked for advice: "Should I marry him?" "Can such a woman be trusted?" "Will Capitalism change only through Revolution?" "How can a mother's heart bear such shame?" "Does a business partner need a *written* promise?" And the editor, famed Abe Cahan, often answered the questions himself, in consoling, indignant or magisterial words. Many of the letters, and more of the answers, contained Jewish folk-sayings, which my father read or embroidered ("Sleep faster: we need the pillows"), and the adages sank roots in my mind.

"When you're hungry, sing; when you're hurt, laugh."

"When a father helps a son, both laugh; when a son helps his father, both cry."

" 'For instance' is not proof."

"It's better to be embarrassed than ashamed."

"Safeguarding a girl in love is harder than guarding a sackfull of fleas."

"A man is not honest just because he had no chance to steal."

"Dear God; let us not suffer all that we may be able to endure."

"A fool measures water with a sieve."

"A saloon can't corrupt a good man, and a synagogue can't reform a bad one."

"Little children don't let you sleep; big children won't let you live."

"He only lies twice a year—in summer and in winter."

After the daily, delicious heart-throbs of the *Bintel Brief* came the climax to each night's vicarious dramas: the reading of a short story—a tale by Cahan himself, or I. J. Singer, the great Sholom Asch or the incomparable Sholem Aleichem. My father read very well; he had a faultless sense of comic timing and significant pauses; he was a marvellous mimic. And those stories held me in thrall.

To this day, I remember the textures, if not the plots, of the tales these as yet unheralded writers spun out: about an impending *shiddach* or a calamitous purchase, an encounter with an anti-Semite or an uneasy deposit in that novel institution (likely to swindle its depositors at any moment) known as a Bank (the deposit was promptly withdrawn). Sages, salesmen, yearning widows, shameless philanderers; overworked men, undernourished wives; the dreamy, the lazy, the successful, the *shlemiels;* men burning with idealism, men soured by life; the favours and fevers of love sought, love lost, love gained, love not requited; *shtetl* customs and American foibles; *brisses,* betrothals, betrayals, Bar Mitzvahs; the pleasure of wine in a *glazeleh,* the dangers of *schnaps* in a glass; children who flourished, children who perished; the laugh in the doorway, the cry in the night—I can hear them all again, as I write, faint old music as from a calliope, playing its accompaniment to the kaleidoscope of characters that turns in my memory.

And here, too, in the tales told by fine writers, lay a cornucopia of folk-sayings they knew, or witticisms they coined. It was from Sholem Aleichem, if I am right, that I first learned these:

"To a marriage, walk; to a divorce, run."

"Gossip is nature's telephone."

"April Fool: a joke repeated 365 times a year."

"A bachelor is a man who comes to work each morning from a different direction."

"The girl who can't dance says the band can't keep time."

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"When a poor Jew eats a chicken, *one* of them is sick."

I do not think we can ever recover the precious freshness of childhood; yet our minds are populated by people from the past. In my memory, none move more merrily, more vividly, in more magical measure than the characters in those stories my father read to me when both I and he—*alav ha-shalom*—were so very young.

I WAS LUCKY to be an immigrant child, to grow up in a bilingual world; for nothing so sharpens the ear to the subtleties that differentiate words as constantly shuttling between two languages. A language, in Walter Nash's phrase, is "a palisade of verbal custom."

> In language I make . . . effigies and create ikons. In words, whispering, stumbling words, in the litter and ceaseless drift of words, is my searching for my own identity . . . [and] the articulation that will go on, at the heart of all experience, till at last all burdens are laid down and I need no more words, not even amen and goodnight.[1]

And as I grew older, it was from my parents, friends or our neighbours, from store-keepers or soap-box orators, at meetings of the Workmen's Circle or on picnics of Chicago's Lodzer colony, that I heard more and still more scintillating sayings:

"When a young man marries, he divorces his mother."

"Out of snow, you can't make cheese-cake."

"The man who marries for money will earn it."

"A rabbi whose congregation doesn't want to run him out of town isn't a rabbi; and a rabbi whose congregation *does* run him out of town isn't a man."

"When you go to a restaurant, choose a table near a waiter."

The folk-sayings were not only sardonic or scathing; some stopped my heart.

"I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes—until I met a man who had no feet."

"The rich have heirs, not children."

"Pity was invented by the weak."

"When you add to the truth, you subtract from it."

"No one is as deaf as the man who will not listen."

THE ADAGES I HEARD struck me, even in my puberty, as much more than little homilies. They were illuminations, electrifying flashes of perception and perspicuity. And, perhaps because I dimly dreamed of some day being a writer, they struck me as masterpieces of precision: the use of small words to teach huge truths. Even the homeliest folksaying impressed me as having a certain beauty; for there *is* beauty—or at least, elegance—in the economy and pungency with which a simple saying can convey a profound verity.

Words must surely be counted among the most powerful drugs man ever invented. In my adolescence, I became an absolute nut about aphorisms. I collected epigrams the way some boys collect stamps. For years, obsessed with a fear of forgetting anything, I wrote down every *bon mot* I read or heard. My pockets became filing-cases for tersities of wisdom (scribbled on scraps of paper, backs of envelopes, margins torn from newspapers), a hodge-podge of verbal wonders—from O. O. McIntyre or Will Rogers to "Kin" Hubbard and the true masters: Mark Twain, G. K. Chesterton, Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, H. L. Mencken (the most neglected humorist in American letters). In a spree of affluence, I bought a 4 in. by 6 in. card catalogue, and packets of lined cards, and blank index guides on which to write my categories: "Fate . . . Lust . . . Honour . . . Folly . . ."—and so began to systematise my own Bartlett.

I devoured any anthology that offered the cream of the jests of Bacon, Montaigne, Sidney Smith, La Rochefoucauld. I still remember my rapture on discovering Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*, or my jubilation in collected quotations of Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Balthasar Gracian, Heinrich Heine. I revelled in admiration over the genius that could marshal words, metaphors, irony, paradox with so much originality, to achieve such deft insight. In a way, I honed my mind on the whetstones of epigrams. I came to suspect, long before I encountered Sigmund Freud, that witticisms are stratagems to evade the censors of the self, that comedy is a complex masquerade and murder oft peeps through the masks of our wit, that "humour is the messenger of truths that churn behind the camouflage of levity."

And then, with the audacity of the young, I turned aphorist myself, selling an article to the *New Republic*, entitled "Political Lexicon"; it was a 24-year-old's broadside, dripping cynicism, against the stupid, heartless, hypocritical System. One sentence will give you the flavour:

[1] Walter Nash, *Our Experience of Language* (1971), p. 192.

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Rules of War: The rules, solemnly observed by sovereign nations, which make it illegal to hit below the toes.

I was, of course, too young to *know* very much: to distinguish grievances from truth; to suspect the sardonic, which is so attractive to youth, and respect the expedient, which enrages the impatient.

I then tried to distinguish adages from apophthegms from aphorisms. What makes an epigram different from a proverb, a folk-saying from a maxim? I cannot say that I did much more than tone up my semantic muscles in this foredoomed exercise; but I did begin to think of folk-sayings as proverbs' homely brothers—and of both as packaged common sense. An adage, I decided, is sober, an aphorism arresting, but an epigram must tickle the ribs. Proverbs deal with universals; epigrams deal with anything. An adage may be trite; an aphorism is no aphorism if it is. Proverbs are encapsulated experience; epigrams are flashes of fun. Proverbs are the primers we inherit from the past; epigrams are often new, young, in vogue—and may pass out of usage. Epigrams, I concluded, are displays of wit traceable to a known man, often more clever than true, prized more by intellectuals than by the masses.

It may amuse you to know that I was so lost in my obsession that I visualised its components: an aphorism was dressed in silk, an epigram bedecked with sequins, a proverb wrapped in fur; and folk-sayings, obviously, ran around in honest homespun.

IT OCCURRED TO ME that witticisms achieve the greatest longevity of a writer's output. How few of us have read a page by the authors of lines we remember with that special gratitude we accord the jocular, the exactly apt, the wickedly apposite.

"If triangles had a God, He would have three sides."

"The doctor who treats himself has a fool for a doctor—and a fool for a patient."

"No one forgets where he buried the hatchet."

"Conscience is the inner voice that tells us that someone is watching."

"An idealist is one who, upon observing that a rose smells better than a cabbage, concludes that it will also make better soup."[2]

[2] These epigrams were coined by, respectively, Voltaire, William Osler, "Kin" Hubbard, H. L. Mencken and Mencken again.

The more I read, down the years, the more I found myself plumbing beneath and beyond the surfaces of wit. I came to see that the sayings of a people reflect its particular history, values, and sensibilities; that any people (or nation, tribe, sect) possesses a distinctive style of thought, special patterns of esteem or scorn, characteristic reflexes of affection and contempt and moral outrage—and all these are mirrored in the adages men prize.

Yet the more I studied proverbs, the more I found certain common themes running through all of them: whatever a people's experience or ethos or faith, men ultimately voice the bitter conclusion that life is unjust, fate blind, fortune heartless. And I began to understand that all men, whether Zulu or Tagalog, Christian or Jew, desperately try, through the reiterated sorcery of words, to fortify their faith in a life after death, and feel a passionate necessity to believe that virtue *will* be rewarded, that evil will be punished, that truth will somehow triumph in the end.

I WENT TO STUDY in London, in 1934, and in that glorious hodge-podge of villages nestling around the Thames, I discovered second-hand bookstores such as I had never dreamed of before. There were hundreds of them, crammed from floor to ceiling, spilling their frayed treasures across sagging shelves, indoor counters and outdoor bins. The shops stood like noble beggars —near the British Museum, off Russell Square, in alien Soho; but most of them were crowded along Charing Cross Road, unshaved cheek by untidy jowl, and overflowed into the lanes and alleyways that web off that paradise for bibliophiles. Foyle's, bulging out the seams of four high buildings, was but the largest athenaeum: St Martin's Lane, which now is not a lane but a traffic jam, bristled with frumpy shops for antiquarians, faddists, collectors of everything and anything ever written about Aztec gold, Battersea boxes, Cretan murals; the empires of Assyria, China, Islam; the art of Moghul miniatures or Mithraic amulets; the politics of Sparta, Solon, Suleiman, Samarkand.

How many hypnotised hours I spent in those dusty dungeons, reading as much as browsing, and browsing much more than buying (I was living on $1.50 a day) I cannot remember. One day my eye, travelling along a decrepit shelf, fell upon a thick, greenish volume whose title, in

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shining gilt, was *Jüdische Sprichwörter und Redensarten.* I took the book down. The text was Yiddish, on the right-hand pages, with Roman-letter phonetic renditions on the left; and the pages were numbered "backwards," as Hebrew books are, starting from what would be the end of an English volume.

The volume was a collection of folk-sayings compiled by one Ignaz Bernstein who, according to his Yiddish foreword, had first published 2,056 adages in 1888. I glanced through the pages idly, then with excitement—for not only did I recognise a great many old friends from home: I read quiddities I had never heard before. (Many were totally incomprehensible, for they contained Russian, Polish, Lithuanian words, or the "inside" phrases of Galitizianer Jews.)

Once or twice a week, after that, I went back to the shelf in that stall in that shop (could it have been in Cecil Court?) where Ignaz Bernstein's work mutely rested. I would plunge into its pages, scribbling notes with greed and joy; and when I returned to the Common Room of the London School of Economics, I would with assumed aplomb toss off verbal firecrackers—to an opponent at the chess table or the usual covey of kibitzers: "There's a Yiddish folk-saying that goes . . . ."

How I longed to buy Bernstein! But how could I? The volume was selling for 15 shillings, I think—a fearful sum for my budget. But my yearnings grew, my continued pirating made me feel guilty, and the desiccated Scrooge who owned the bookstore was giving me glances that increased in nastiness with each visit. It all made me covet Ignaz Bernstein as I coveted few books before or since.

One day, I noticed something on the title page; my heart leaped, Bernstein's work had been published the very year of my birth—and in Warsaw, which is but 70 miles from Lodz, where I was born. I felt like Saul on his way to Damascus. Had destiny drawn me to this seedy shop in a sunless lane in a far-off land? The subject, the place of publication, the date, even the author's initials, "I.B." (which the madness of desire made me moan "*Ich bin*": I am)—were these not magical omens? I swiftly figured that if I cut down on three breakfasts, skipped four lunches, say, and trimmed the costs of three dinners . . . I handed fifteen precious shillings to the startled owner and hurried back to my digs in Brunswick Square.

Every night thereafter, when the long day's studies were completed, I rewarded myself with a dip into Bernstein, reading the Yiddish, slogging through the phonetic explications of idioms I could not fathom, lost in a far-off, yet vaguely familiar, world of *shtetl* sayings and rustic adages . . . .

Then tragedy struck. Bernstein disappeared. I searched through my skimble-skamble of notes, papers, journals, textbooks, books borrowed from a classmate, the library, the lodger on the floor above. But I could not find Bernstein. I searched again, quickly, with no success, then reassured myself by thinking he would turn up tomorrow—perhaps under my bed, in the closet, fallen behind the bookcase. But I was wrong. He did not. Bernstein had really disappeared! Where, when, by whose hand? Lost? Stolen? Thrown out by the harpy widow (of a *pukka sahib* slain in "Indja") to whom I paid rent? Committed to the dustbin by my slovenly char? To be sold to some bookseller in Bloomsbury or on voracious Charing Cross Road? To end in a dump in Bethnal Green, an incinerator in Southwark, as kindling for some fireplace in Chelsea? Oh, God! (Nay, *Gottenyu!*)

On and off, during the years that followed, I would think of *Jüdische Sprichwörter und Redensarten:* but I never ran across another copy —not in London or New York, Berlin or Hollywood. I wrote to several book dealers on Fourth Avenue, and to book-finding services; but the months passed, year on and off, and the pain wore off and in time I became too deeply involved in work in Washington to take up the chase again.

It is a strange thing, wholly mystifying to (and inexplicable by) me that it was not until thirty years later, as I thought of writing these lines, that I suddenly longed for Ignaz Bernstein again. I phoned a librarian friend and asked if he knew of Bernstein's compendium. He told me the book had just been reprinted—in Oldsheim, Germany, and suggested I try certain booksellers on the Lower East Side. Need I say how swiftly I 'phoned them? The first had never heard of Bernstein; the second offered to order the book ("You should have it in eight weeks"); but the third dealer whispered, "I have a copy . . . quite expensive, I'm afraid . . . oh, not the *new* edition: the old 1908 . . . ." I did not let him finish: "Are you sure? Will you check? Please. Read the copyright page . . . ." In a moment I heard the miraculous truth, and within an hour dear Ignaz Bernstein, published in 1908, was in my hands once more.

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The first thing I did, naturally, was turn to the fly-leaf. Could fortune be so kind as to have resurrected the very volume I had owned in Brunswick Square over three decades ago? Alas: no signature, in my handwriting or anyone else's, was inscribed on the olive-green paper.

Whose copy of Bernstein I now own, I shall never know. But how grateful I am to whoever it was who bought it, received it, stole it, lost it or sold it so that it could once more become mine. I still find many of its local locutions odd, many of its nouns and names furiously incomprehensible, many of its provincial idioms impenetrable; yet, I treasure the more durable of those old, all-but-forgotten pearls, some of which I added to my collection of sayings.

THAT THE ANCIENT Hebrews put great store in proverbs scarcely needs to be said: consider how lavishly they are strewn through the Old Testament, or were presented separately—in the Book of Proverbs, the books of the prophets, "wisdom literature,"[3] the Apocrypha.[4]

The Talmud, that monumental compendium of 1,200 years of dialectics (from the 5th century before, to the 8th century of, the Christian era)[5] and commentaries, discussion and debate on the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the post-Biblical sages, is an inexhaustible treasure-trove of pithy sagacities (in Aramaic) on every conceivable aspect of faith, life, law, man, virtue, evil, customs, morals and mores. The names of over 2,000 rabbinical teachers appear in the Talmud; so far as I know, no one has counted the apophthegms.[6]

It is wise to remember that proverbs preceded printing by thousands and thousands of years: it was through oral sayings that the meat and marrow of wisdom circulated among the tribes of man. Collections of sayings (first hand-written, which few men could afford, then copied and later printed) became very popular with the Jewish masses.

The so-called "wisdom literature" was rooted in and flowered from the people's wisdom; the scholars and poets who collected folk-sayings often improved upon them—but their origins remain the masses. Proverbs are an "international genre," with separate classes for verbal instruction and for moral exhortation. ("Happy is the man who . . ." straddles both.) Sayings are still used as pedagogy by primitive (pre-literate) groups, and were more formally employed by the ancient Chinese, Hindus, Persians, Egyptians to train civil servants. As early as King Solomon, the Hebrews used oral precepts for vocational training—and to educate an elite, a new class: the officials of the ancient state of Israel. Religious/moralistic sayings spread among the Israelites to transmit the essence of monotheism, of "Yahwistic piety," and as exhortations to obey the Law. Proverbs disseminated not only elementary knowledge and skills, but a whole code of morals, a system of ethics, a set of sanctions for a new way of life.[7]

The lucidity and vitality of proverbs made them priceless for instruction; and the rabbis preferred to teach orally instead of from written texts, for they feared that when holy Scripture is dissected again and again it runs the danger of becoming didactic and barren. Worse, once a judicial interpretation is written down (the scholars of Judaism reasoned) it discourages fresh thinking, for men tend to feel that what is written is superior to what is told. Above all, the rabbis wanted to preserve a direct, lively, intimate rapport with their students. The Talmud told them: "Prayer

[3] The "wisdom literature" includes the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, certain Psalms, and the Apocrypha: Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Solomon, IV Maccabeas.

[4] Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are not in the formal, closed canon, produced from the time of the Second Temple (about 538 B.C.E.) to the defeat of Bar Kochba's rebellion against the Romans (135 of the Christian era). An excellent work is R. Travers Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha* (New York, 1970).

[5] The span of time covered by the Talmud is the subject of considerable difference of opinion among experts (I am certainly not one). The "orthodox," often dogmatic figure for the number of years encompassed by the Talmud is 600. But if one remembers that the Old Testament is the "source" for, and subject matter of, the Talmud, this would extend the time period to "about ten centuries." (See the Introduction to *The New English Bible,* Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, London and New York, 1961, 1970.) The most recent researches of Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary, supports the startling judgment that many passages in the *Mishnah* and other rabbinical works were written *before* or during the Babylonian exile—that is to say, six or more centuries prior to what has, until recently, been the consensus of the experts. This justifies my "1200 years" figure. (See Louis Finkelstein, *New Light from the Prophets,* 1969, pp. 1–13).

[6] Aramaic was the Semitic language spoken, millennia ago, around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. During their exile in Babylonia, the Hebrews adopted Aramaic as their language. For a scholarly survey of proverbs in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Talmud, see *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. X, pp. 226–231, where several hundred Aramaic sayings and "Judaeo-German" (*i.e.,* Yiddish) proverbs are included.

[7] William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach, S.C.M. Press, London* (1970), pp. 6–17.

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should not be recited as if a man is reading from a document."

THE RABBIS, seeking to keep their audiences alert (during a discussion, no less than a sermon), would often toss Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian words into their exposition: this was sure to excite interest and provoke questioning.[8] The *Aggadah*, an enormous repository of folklore, fables, parables, allegories and witticisms, is studded with foreign words and phrases—which are then explained. The preachers of Judaism found a folk-saying more effective than a sermon, in the same way that a scalpel is more precise than a club. "Epigrams stab to the heart."[9]

The marvellous sayings of Jesus ben Sira (*Ecclesiasticus*) and the matchless *Pirke Abot* ("Sayings of the Fathers"), which embraced six centuries of Jewish wisdom and wit (from the 3rd century before, to the 3rd century after, the Christian era), were and are among the most beloved of Jewish books. In the Middle Ages, Jewish thinkers and psalmists published literally thousands of different compilations of Talmudic and folk wisdom.[10] And in each new generation, new teachers, prophets, poets, philosophers, legalists and local wits, some famous, some obscure, kept adding (or embellishing) sayings and profundities to the unclosed treasury of Jewish thought: Rashi's classic commentaries, Bachya Ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*, Maimonides' majestic code, Judah Halevi's noble *Kuzari*, the mystical revelations of the *Zohar*.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, an immense treasure of aphorisms poured into Jewish thought from the Hasidim of Eastern Europe, who preached religious ecstasy and glorified saintly souls. The Hasidim were rabbis (often not ordained), mystics, holy men, whose every rumination was seized upon by their disciples: "Our hasid is wiser than your hasid" was a refrain that encouraged the competitive production of aphorisms.[11]

In the 19th and 20th centuries, new men of letters invigorated the old tradition: Chaim Bialik, the leading poet in the renaissance of Hebrew, published a huge *Sefer Ha-Agada* (in collaboration with Ravnitzki) and a smaller "assemblage" of apophthegms. Nathan Stutchkoff's *Oytser fun Yiddisher Sprach* ("Thesaurus—or Treasure—of the Yiddish Language") is a cornucopia of folk-lore and folk-sayings. My hero, Ignaz Bernstein, has preserved for history almost 4,000 *vitzen*. A short, excellent culling of proverbs from the Talmud was published in 1900 by one Madison C. Peters, who seems to have drawn heavily on preceding anthologies and translations.[12]

In recent years, publishers have given us English translations of Mendele Mocher Seforim, Sholem Aleichem, the remarkable aphorist "The Chofetz Chaim" (Rabbi Yisroel Meir Ha-cohen), Hebrew poets from Spain, post-Biblical writers and philosophers—to say nothing of miscellaneous collections of Jewish proverbs and folk-sayings compiled by Lewis Browne, Joseph L. Baron, Hanya Ayalti, Fred Kogos, *et alia*.

A LOVELY PASSAGE in Midrash (Canticles, 1b) runs:

> Scorn not the *mashal* (proverb), for through it thou mayest gain a firm hold upon the Law, like a king who lost a piece of gold (and) by means of a wick, which is worth but a trifle, was able to find it again.

"A firm hold upon the Law . . . ." History inflicted such a succession of catastrophes on the Jews, from Babylon to Buchenwald, that special utility became attached to what was not destructible. Proverbs are portable. Wisdom takes up no room. Adages were the one Jewish treasure no Pilate could plunder, no inquisitor burn, no Cossack loot, no Nazi defile. Proverbs were the jewels concealed in Jewish minds.

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[8] See Samuel Rapaport, *A Treasury of The Midrash* (1968), p. 5.

[9] Alexander Smith, in *Dreamthorp: A Book of Essays Written in the Country* (1864; repr. Peter Pauper Press, 1947).

[10] Collections of proverbs were numerous and popular among Jews for many centuries: Rabbi Hai Gaon's *Musar ha-Sekhel* ("The Ethics of Wisdom"), Samuel ha-Nagid's *Ben Mishle*, Moses ibn Ezra's *Tarshish*, and a good many works translated from Arabic (in which many Hebrew poets and scholars framed their words): Ibn Gabirol's great *Mibhar ha-Peninim* ("Choice of Pearls") and *Tikun Midot ha-Nefesh* ("The Improvement of the Qualities of the Soul"), Abraham ben Hasdai's *Ben ha-Melekhveha-Nazir* (a story of the Buddha), *Mahberot Immanuel* ("The Compositions of Immanuel of Rome"), etc. Many of the originals, especially those in Arabic, were lost for centuries; many have been found and reprinted within the last hundred years.

[11] The Hasidim produced many remarkable folk-sages, most notably Nachman of Bratslav ("The Bratslaver") whose brilliant sayings were published as *Sefer ha-Midot*. Leaders of the *Haskalah* ("Enlightenment") movement which waged ideological warfare against the "medievalist" hasidim, collected the apophthegms of *their* brightest minds (*e.g.*, the *Sefer ha-Midot* of Solomon Rubin).

[12] Ludwig Seligman (*Parabeln, Legenden und Gedanken*, aus *dem Talmud*), Emanuel Deutsch (*The Talmud)*, Rabbi Henry Cohen (*Talmudic Sayings*), Leopold Dukes (*Rabbinische Blumenlese*), and others.

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The voluminous output of insights flowed from the Jews' unceasing exercise of analytic intelligence, their training in introspection, their need to be astute observers (*i.e.*, to anticipate the conduct of tyrants, bullies or brigands)—and their literacy.

When the overwhelming majority of mankind was illiterate, it was hard to find a Jewish lad over six who could not read and write. Most adult male Jews handled at least three languages: Hebrew in synagogues and "houses of study," Yiddish at home, and—to Gentiles—the language of the land in which they lived. My father, a workingman, denied the equivalent of a high-school education in Lodz, handled Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and (in time) English. Jews were linguists of necessity.

A very large number of sayings deal with man's behaviour, or cast a dazzling light on man's inner drives and moral dilemmas. Many Jewish folk-sayings—about sex, dreams, pride, lust—seem fresher than Freud, though they may be older than King David. Yet this should not surprise us: for if a people hold themselves responsible to God for their every thought, if their teachers persuade them that their fate for all eternity depends on how they live, you may expect them to become intensely self-aware and self-examining. Psychology begins with introspection; philosophy begins in asking "Why?", "How?", "To what end?"

I MUST ADD that the sayings loved and repeated by the Jews were not limited to the legacy of their ancestors. Historians, archaeologists and philologists have so expanded and enriched our knowledge of the past that we now know how polyphonic was the life and growth of cultures, and how remarkable are the similarities of legend and myth in widely separated portions of our globe. (This is no new idea: Josephus, after recounting the story of Moses and the Red Sea, reminds us that Alexander the Great was also said to have marched his forces through a parting, by God's will, of the Pamphylian Sea.)

Since the Israelites lived within the teeming interplay of cultures that made up the civilisation of the Middle East, they were long exposed to Hittite, Phoenician, Chaldean and Arabic wisdom; then to Greek philosophy, the lore of Persia and the fables of Hindus; then to the writings of the Romans and the thought of Muslims and Moors.[13] And after the Jews were expelled from Spain, they came into close contact with French, Dutch, Italian, German, English, Rumanian, Polish, Russian (indeed all Slavonic) culture.

The enrichment which historical tragedies (as a by-product) conferred on Judaic thought and cosmopolitanism is impossible to appraise. What is rarely remarked upon is that the children of Moses *had* to become anthropologists. It should not surprise us that Hebrew proverbs incorporated the wisdom of many other peoples: the *degree* to which such sayings and folklore filtered into the consciousness of the Jews is beyond measure. "A drowning man does not care about getting wet" is an Arabic saying—but the same idea is echoed in various forms in various tongues. The same is certainly true of "Penny wise, pound foolish," or "If you seek honey, expect bee stings"—which was cited long ago by al-Mutanabbi, an Arab who must have been quoting the greatest of all proverbists: Anonymous.

What all this adds up is this: the parentage of a folk-saying is often as difficult to determine as the posthumous location of "Abraham's bosom." Of the eighty-two fables we attribute to Aesop, for instance, only one, according to Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, II), can safely be called original. Aesop, a slave in Samos, collected and transcribed the animalised lore of countless centuries and a hodge-podge of peoples. How memorable is Thackeray's summation:

> The tales were told ages before Aesop; and asses under lions' manes roared in Hebrew; and sly foxes flattered in Etruscan; and wolves in sheep's clothing gnashed their teeth in Sanskrit, no doubt. *(The Newcomers)*

I think you will be surprised by the number of aphorisms, attributed to other sources or persons, which are to be found in the Talmud, which often alludes to popular sayings and often clinches an argument, for one or another technical point of law, by citing a piece of folk-wisdom.[14]

[13] The amount of legend, custom and demonology that is common to the people of the Old Testament and other peoples (whether Masai tribes or Polynesian clans) has been thoroughly documented by James Frazer (*Folklore in the Old Testament*) and greatly expanded by Theodor H. Gaster (*Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*). And as I write these words, a book just published in England lies before me: Professor William McKane's *Proverbs: A New Approach* (S.C.M. Press, London, 1970), a *tour de force* of cross-analysis of the old sayings of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt.

[14] Evidence for prior collections of folk-sayings is found in the Talmud: *Baba Kamma* (92b, 93a) and *Yebamoth* (118b); see the *Babylonian Talmud* (12 vols.), translated into English by various authors, edited by I. Singer (Soncino Press, London, 1935–1952).

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"Give every man the benefit of the doubt."

"Look at the contents, not at the bottle."

"Don't threaten a child, either punish or forgive him."

"A dream uninterpreted is like a letter unopened."

"It is better to die on your feet than live on your knees."

"Experience is the name we give our mistakes."

"In our dreams, it is not we who sin—but the dream."

"All is well that ends well."

I hope all this will impress you as much as I was impressed when, in my salad days, reading John Wycliffe's preface to his translation of the Bible, I learned that he had undertaken the awesome labour because he felt the Bible is meant "for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

LAST YEAR in London, quite by chance, I purchased a dish-towel on which was block-printed:

"Little dogs make the most noise."

"No one needs help to get into trouble."

"An obedient wife commands her man."

"Idle young men become unhappy old men."

Are not these lovely sayings characteristically "Jewish"? They certainly are; but they happen to come from the storehouse of horse-sense of the Maoris of New Zealand.

But the following, surely, are Jewish in style, mood and substance:

"A nation's treasure is its scholars."

"Don't open a shop unless you like to smile."

"With virtue, you can't be entirely poor; without virtue, you can't really be rich."

"Deep doubts, deep wisdom; small doubts, little wisdom."

But they are taken from a collection of old Chinese proverbs.

Are there, then, any special qualities, any singular psychology or philosophical stance which distinguish the proverbs of Jews from those of other people? I am confident there are, and for these reasons (which I quote from the preface of *The Joys of Yiddish*):

> Yiddish lends itself to an extraordinary range of observational nuances and psychological subtleties. Steeped in sentiment, it is sluiced with sarcasm. It loves the ruminative, because it rests on a rueful past; favours paradox, because it knows that only paradox can do justice to the injustices of life; adores irony, because the only way the Jews could retain their sanity was to view a dreadful world with sardonic, astringent eyes. In its innermost heart, Yiddish swings between *schmaltz* and derision.
>
> I have always marvelled at how fertile this *lingua franca* is in what may be called the vocabulary of insight. . . . Jews *had* to be psychologists, and their preoccupation with human, no less than divine, behaviour made Yiddish remarkably rich in names for character types. Little miracles of discriminatory precision are contained in the distinctions between such simpletons as a *nebech*, a *shlemiel*, a *shmendrick*, a *shnook*; or between such dolts as a *klutz*, a *yold*, a *Kuni Lemmel*, a *shlep*, a *Chaim Yankel*. All of them inhabit the kingdom of the ineffectual, but each is assigned a separate place in the roll call. The sense of differentiation is so acute in Yiddish that a word like, say *paskudnyak* has no peer in any language I know for the vocal delineation of a nasty character. And Yiddish coins new names with ease for new personality types: A *nudnik* is a pest; a *phudnik* is a *nudnik* with a Ph.D.

AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, let me explore one important aspect of the role which proverbs have played in Jewish life—a role which has not, in my judgment, been sufficiently emphasised.

Jewish boys would begin to study Hebrew as early as the age of 3, and very rarely (unless mentally deficient) remained illiterate past the age of 6. On his first day in the *cheder*, the elementary Hebrew school, the little boy's parents would take him to the *melamed* (teacher) and would stand over the child as the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were pointed to and pronounced: "*Aleph . . . baiz . . . gimel . . . .*" Sometimes the letters would be printed on a slate and coated with honey, for the young scholar to lick off as he repeated the sounds; sometimes the mother would reward the boy with a honey-cookie, shaped in the form of the Hebrew letter the lad pronounced, as soon as he uttered its name; sometimes the mother or *melamed* would place a drop of honey on the child's tongue, asking, "How does that taste?"

"Sweet," the boy would, of course, reply.

"The study of Torah," the *melamed* or mother would reply, "is sweeter."

And at the end of the child's first lesson, his mother would enfold him, with a shawl or veil, and utter a prayer that her son "fulfil his life with years of study (the Torah), marriage and good deeds."[15]

Every Jewish male over 13 hurried to the synagogue to pray at least three times a day: in the

[15] For a survey of educational practices among Jews, see Simon Greenberg, "Jewish Educational Institutions," in *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion*, edited by Louis Finkelstein, Vol. II (third edition, Harper, 1960).

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morning (*schachris*), in the afternoon (*mincha*), after sundown (*maairev*). The synagogue, from its inception, was a place for both prayer and study, and the distinction between the two is exceedingly difficult to draw. . . . "Study and prayer, or (better) study-prayer, was the most potent mortar in Jewish life. It was the linchpin in a Jew's self-esteem. It lent meaning and purpose to the most difficult and desperate of existences. It illuminated life. It ennobled, inspired, redeemed. It admitted even the humblest Jew to the company of sages, prophets, scholars, saints.

Now, learning in groups, and discussion in groups, were especially favoured; the Talmud (*Berakot*, 63) says: "Learning is achieved only in company." Virtually all of male Jewry participated in a perpetual seminar. Even the cobblers. Even the tailors. The drivers and diggers, farmhands and carpenters. The peddlers and beggars and shopkeepers. . . . They were all arguers, dialecticians, amateur theologians. And in the *Bet Midrash* ("house of study") every Jew sat "like [an] intellectual magnate . . . When a problem came up, there was immediately a host of people pouring out opinions, arguments, quotations . . . . The stomachs were empty, the homes barren, but the minds were crammed with the riches of the Torah" (A. J. Heschel, *The Earth is the Lord's*). One may learn a good deal about Jewish life by remembering that it was customary for Jews, when they met or whiled away an hour, to ask one another: *"Zug mir a shtikl Torah"* (Tell me a piece of Torah). Then discussion—fervent, contentious, casuistic, hot with *pilpul* (hair-splitting), all-absorbing—was launched.

The point I want to stress is this: when a Jew came home, he would tell his wife what "portion" of Torah he had read or discussed or heard discussed: what maxim from Akiba or Saadia Gaon, what fresh explications of a man's duty to his parents, children, brothers, sisters, the old, the sick, the poor; what revelations of the Messiah's coming, or the nature of immortality, or the rewards in paradise ("the world-to-come") for the bitter travails of this life on earth.

Such majestic mysteries, conveyed to a mother or wife or child, required prodigious simplification—not only because they are themselves saturated in complexity, but because even the discussions of Jewish laymen were extremely technical, cloaked in theological conundrums, flecked with such a profusion of split-hairs that they torment ordinary reason. (Anyone who has ploughed through a page of Talmud will know what I mean.)

And no device proved more useful to the Jewish husband, in imparting quick summaries, than—proverbs, parables, folk-sayings: The meaning of a metaphor in Genesis or a parable in the Aggadah; the reduction of a logical dilemma to a nutshell; the rendition of Rabbi Meir's paradox or Yitzhok the Tailor's question—all were borne down that verbal stream in which the sacred teachings moved from the temple of God through the houses of study into the streets—and home to the kitchens.

In this endless process, it was folk-sayings that made the hallowed homely, the sacred secular, the lofty cosy. And since Yiddish was the language through which East European Jewish mothers could participate in the savouring of Talmudic law and lore, Yiddish was the language they used to transmit the great culture and tradition to their children.

So it was that I, like any other Jewish boy, heard—from my mother or father or uncle—some bit of wit or wisdom or wonder, coined twenty centuries ago, which lay within the forbidding forests of the Talmud, or which (I would discover forty years later) was a saying of Rab Ashi or some disciple of some illustrious saga-man who had adorned one or another school of thought in some academy in Jerusalem or Babylon.

How can one find words to express one's gratitude for such a legacy?

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Peregrine Worsthorne

Arguing on The Box

Intellectuals & TV Conversation

MOST OF THE JOURNALISTS or experts who appear on television talk programmes tend to be the staff of, or write for, the quality press or for the intellectual magazines. This is surprising, since even talk programmes on television have a "mass circulation" viewership which one would expect to respond most warmly to those who work for the *Mirror* or *Express* rather than *Times* or *Guardian*. After all, the *Mirror* and *Express* train their writers to appeal to the masses, to have the common touch, etc—skills which one might suppose television talk programmes also required. Yet over and over again it is the intellectual, relatively high-brow journalists, who professionally only write for relatively small circulation publications, who get invited to entertain or stimulate the television millions—Bernard Levin, Malcolm Muggeridge, Alan Brien, Paul Johnson, Anthony Howard—rather than the stars of the popular press.

Why, if I may be personal, does the editor, say, of *News at Ten* or *Talkback*, both television programmes with a very wide viewership, invite me to air my views whereas the editor of the *Daily Mirror* or *Express* would regard me as far too much of a minority taste for their readers? Why does television, which wants to hold the attention of the masses, go for the very writers who are least equipped to do this, and largely ignore those who, in journalistic terms, are best at it? As a journalist I have never been heard of by my milkman, tobacconist, etc, all of whom would find me wholly unreadable. But as a talker on television, however, they know me quite well.

The same is true of a great number of so-called high-brow journalists. Although as writers they are obviously unable to communicate with the masses, as television performers they can, whereas the popular journalist, whose written words are read by millions, very often cannot get across on the "box" at all.

Of course there can be no general explanation. Clearly writing in the newspapers is a very different activity to talking on the "box", with all sorts of attributes, like appearance, accent, charm of manner being relevant to the one and not to the other. So much is obvious. But there is no reason to suppose that high-brow journalists, as a category, are more photogenic or visually appealing than low-brow journalists. I am sure that the *Mirror, Express, News of the World*, and the others could field a team much more attractive-looking than the high-brow names already mentioned. Yet the fact remains that so far as the talk programmes are concerned it is the intellectuals who dominate the screen.

UP TO A POINT THERE IS no mystery about this. Intellectuals are used to words and playing around with ideas. So naturally they tend to talk better than non-intellectuals. But then this should in theory apply to journalism as well. If it is true that intellectuals talk better than non-intellectuals, it is no less true that they usually write better too. In that sense, articles by Muggeridge, Levin, Johnson, Howard or Brien are much more readable than those by their popular press counterparts. Yet whereas the masses won't read them, they will listen to them, and whereas they will read their popular counterparts they won't listen to them.

It would be nice to conclude that the television viewer is more intelligent than the newspaper reader, more willing to listen to good talk than to read good writing. But this, I fear, is not so. I know quite well why, for example, my television talk is acceptable to a mass viewership in a

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way that my journalistic writing is not acceptable to a mass readership. It is because the level of the spoken word is much lower. I talk on the television in about as intellectually unrigorous a way as popular journalists write: use as many platitudes and clichés in the studio as they do in their columns. Intellectuals on television are acceptable not because they are intellectuals but because they are behaving as if they are not.

TELEVISION TALK PROGRAMMES are strange affairs but they all seem to me to have one thing in common: the level of conversation or debate is always very much lower than one might expect from the intellectual level of those taking part. If you are watching a group of geniuses gathered together in the studio, their exchanges will come across as mildly intelligent conversation; if you are watching a group of routine intellectuals, the level will be that of a saloon bar debate; and if the performers are so-called men or women in the street, or concerned members of the public, the level is little short of moronic. There is something about a television studio, in short, that makes us all, conversationally speaking, below par. A television producer concerned with these kind of programmes, therefore, has to over-cast, so to speak, getting Laurence Olivier for walk-on parts, knowing that his only chance of getting even a passably interesting or even literate programme is to have an all-star cast.

I recently took part in an ad lib programme on the subject of "patriotism" with Lords Annan and Chalfont and Goronwy Rees as my fellow panellists, three highly articulate and brilliant intellectuals. Yet nothing of any interest or originality was said. The standard of conversation was pitifully banal and pedestrian. No extract from it could possibly be worth printing in the quality press. What it had was the appearance of intellectual conversation—since three prominent intellectuals were taking part—without the content. There they all were, looking distinguished and wise and possibly even witty, without saying anything in the least intellectually demanding or above anybody's head. Of course television likes to get intellectuals on their talk programmes. This guarantees them all the prestige of the quality press without the disadvantage of having difficult or high-brow material. Mass circulation papers do not ask intellectual luminaries to write for them, because the resulting articles would, for the most part, be unpopularly exacting. Television producers need have no such qualms, because intellectual luminaries talk on television in a way they would not think of writing in a newspaper, lend the authority of their names and positions to intellectual mush which they would rather die than be associated with in print.

THE FROST PROGRAMME is another example of this development. The maestro chooses a subject like political violence and invites about 100 or so men and women into a giant studio to discuss it with him. Such a programme took place after the miners' strike. Most of those taking part were militants of one kind or another, students, trade unionists, Monday Club-ers, Far Leftists, CND, and so on. But a minority, as always, were journalists and academics. These are not only invited, but paid for their trouble, as well as being seated in the front row. Needless to say, pandemonium reigned. Rational debate was quite out of the question. What, one must ask, was the point of having the intellectuals and academics in attendance? Certainly what I contributed myself was of such a blindingly obvious kind that any bright sixth-former could have done as well. Two of my fellow intellectuals, Corinna Adam of the *New Statesman* and Maurice Cowling, the distinguished Cambridge historian and political journalist, did not succeed in getting called at all. At best the intellectual level of the whole affair was that of a *Daily Express* leader.

Why, then, were the intellectual weeklies and universities so heavily and inappropriately represented? The cynical answer would be "to give the programme a spurious intellectual respectability, to make it seem high-class without there being much danger of it being ruined as popular entertainment by actually becoming high-class. . . ." But I do not think it as simple as that. The intellectuals are not simply invited on these kinds of programmes as status symbols. It is rather more subtle than that. Television has such a lowering effect on the human mind that only those with an exceptional gift of words, with more than ordinary fluency in ideas, can even utter a coherent cliché or produce a plain platitude. So paralysing are those cameras that only the exceptionally articulate can speak at all. The common man can only grunt. Only the intellectuals, with a little luck and a lot of whisky, occasionally rise to the linguistic level of the common or ordinary-life man. For moderately

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good conversation on television, as I say, it is necessary to rope in the giants of dialectical precision like Bertrand Russell or Isaiah Berlin.

None of this is surprising. The format of a television talk programme is so stupid that it takes very great cleverness to cope with it at all and genius actually to overcome it. Perhaps I can give another personal illustration. A few months ago I wrote a Sunday article calling for the "Disestablishment" of the BBC.[1] The article sought to encompass within the space of about 1500 words my ideas about broadcasting in a pluralist society, making the point that a semi-national broadcasting organisation like the BBC, conceived as the articulator of a dominant national culture, was bound to lose its way when there was no longer any dominant national culture to articulate. The argument leading to this conclusion was fairly complex and difficult to compress into a single article. But it is my job as a quality-press commentator to identify, simplify, and dramatise these large issues without escaping into boring superficiality. Very often the best way to do so is the use of paradox, which is a useful form of shock tactics in the war of ideas.

In any case, because of this article I was invited by the BBC to take part in *Talkback* which is intended to allow critics of the Corporation to confront its executives. On this occasion the executive in question was the Director-General himself, Charles Curran, and my fellow critics, Philip Whitehead, a Labour MP, and another quality journalist, Michael Shanks, who naturally had equally complicated points of criticism to make. The whole programme lasted about half-an-hour which gave each of the critics about six minutes in all to make his case. By television standards this is a relatively long span. In the event, of course, I could only suggest the barest bones of my argument. But even to do this in a confrontation which is entirely unrehearsed—one has no idea in advance of the precise form the exchange is to take and therefore cannot arrive with a prepared statement—is a nerve-racking challenge, calling for nimbler and quicker wits than any that I possess. How can one possibly avoid being made to look extremely stupid with so little opportunity to develop a reasoned argument? Only, alas, by being quite exceptionally bright.

[1]In the *Sunday Telegraph*, "Disestablish the BBC", 9 April 1972.

THIS IS WHAT I MEAN by suggesting that television talk programmes genuinely need intellectuals in a much more crucial sense than just as respectable status symbols. Not all intellectuals can reduce a complicated thesis to its bare bones while leaving the skeleton of the argument intact. But few who are not intellectuals can even hope to begin to try. Nor does the matter end there. Only an intellectual is likely to have the arrogance not to mind being seen and heard talking in the utterly unsatisfactory manner required by television, rather as only a clergyman can risk being seen near a brothel. Professor Sir Alfred Ayer, for example, can afford to talk platitudes and clichés on the "box"—as he invariably does—because his cleverness is so undisputed in other fields that nobody is likely to question it. The same, obviously to a lesser extent, is true of the quality journalists who mostly appear. They, too, have plenty of other opportunities to show their intellectual mettle. It is not only that the limitations of discussion programmes, by the appalling obstacles they put in the way of rational discussion, require great intellectual stamina if the course is to be completed without disaster. They also require that those who take part—so great are the risks of appearing stupid—should be armoured with an intellectual confidence that can only come from genuine intellectual distinction in other fields.

Does any of this matter? Probably it does, although how much it is difficult to know. Television talk programmes are a new kind of communication, in that they involve very clever people—the country's intellectual mentors—in what is, and has to be, a patently stupid form of public performance, which only clever people can do even tolerably well. The impression given to the public must surely be rather damaging, if they come to believe that serious talk is what they hear on television. But how can they avoid reaching this conclusion if top intellectuals take part in these inescapably superficial encounters? Take again my ad lib programme about patriotism in which nothing was said of any value. Would not the viewer be tempted to assume that if such prestigious thinkers and writers cannot say anything profound on the subject, perhaps there is nothing profound that needs to be said?

Most people, after all, do not read what the philosophers or sages write. But they do see them on the "box." They see them looking very philosophical and sage, and hear the unmistakable intonation and accent of academic distinc-

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tion. The appearance is absolutely genuine. They are looking at Professor *X* or Dr *Y*. That splendid profile of some famous pundit is absolutely genuine. There they all are sitting round a table in a manner wholly appropriate to civilised discourse. Yet what transpires is not civilised discourse, and cannot possibly be. If the viewers could see the studio as a whole, with the army of technicians in the background and the cameras swirling in and out like great galleons in battle, and feel the heat of the arc-lights beating down like some desert sun, they would know that the conditions were totally unsuitable for a worthwhile exchange.

Yet this charade is presented as civilised discourse, and since those taking part are not actors playing the part of intellectual luminaries but the luminaries themselves, how can the public not suppose that this is what it purports to be; that this is how the great sages and philosophers do talk and debate; that this is good conversation, that this ersatz travesty of an intellectual exchange is the real thing. If they react by saying: "Well, well, if that is what high conversation is, give me the saloon bar every time", who can blame them? For they are perfectly right. The level of ordinary people talking in natural surroundings is very often far higher, far more intellectually rigorous, far more stimulating, far funnier, than the contrived exchanges between the wisest in the land under the camera's paralysing eye. They may well say that if that is all that Freddy Ayer or Noël Annan can do by way of profound thinking, then there is really not much difference between university heads and professors and the neighbourhood wiseacre.

In the old days ordinary people knew that there was something called intellectual distinction. Few heard it or even read it. But they respected it as something to be admired from a distance. Television has brought it into their drawing-rooms, or what purports to be it. But in a manner that is at once too credible to be dismissed as false, since those "talking heads," as Robin Day has referred to them,[2] are whom they purport to be, but too superficial to command respect, since the words are seldom worth listening to.

SUCH IS THE NEW DANGER which the press never posed to anything like the same extent. Intellectual distinction can be communicated through the press or at any rate through parts of it. Writers may find the space limitations irksome, but they cannot be compared with the limitations of television. If an editor of a newspaper asks a philosopher to write, he will have an opportunity—say 2,000 words—to say something that at least gives the reader a glimmer of his true quality. Of course some great philosopher writing say, in a quality Sunday newspaper, will not be able to do justice to his thought, but at least he will be able to hint at its scope. And as for those parts of the press where space restrictions make this impossible, or where the readership makes it unsuitable, he will eschew them. There is nothing which their editors can offer him that would make worthwhile the indignity of over-simplification to the point of banality. But this is where television is so temptingly different. Television, in short, makes it worthwhile for the clever to make fools of themselves—not in terms of money which the popular press can more than compete with—but in terms of even more compelling temptations. It is an infinitely more seductive challenge, offering satisfactions to the intellectual that only the strongest wills can resist.

HERE, I THINK, WE COME to a novel development of some possible significance. Television offers the private person, for the first time, the opportunity to become a public figure; enables those whose charm and skill are essentially conversational and intimate to enjoy the mass acclaim normally reserved only for the great demagogues. This is because television reverses practically every traditional rule previously assumed to govern the art of mass persuasion. It is almost a disadvantage to have a loud voice or a loud mouth or a florid, vulgar personality. The kind of man who can dominate the hustings with a giant personality and raucous voice is useless on the "box."

We all know the reason for this. People receive television in their homes, either sitting alone or in small groups. Communicating with the masses through television, therefore, requires a very different kind of skill and charm from communicating from a platform to a mass audience in a public hall. Nowadays, for example, it is not only the monarch who can enjoy the privilege of receiving the politicians and publicists in private audience. We all do it, and we all share Queen Victoria's distaste for being addressed in our own drawing room as at a public meeting. Her complaint a hundred years ago about Mr

[2]Robin Day, "Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist", ENCOUNTER, May 1970.

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Gladstone is echoed today in millions of family gatherings whenever a public figure tries to communicate through the "box" in a public manner. The Disraelian boudoir style—relaxed, intimate, soft-spoken—as befits a private conversation, this is what the television medium insists on.

So much, of course, has often been noted before. But what perhaps is less well understood is the effect this change is having on the categories of people who can today captivate the public. The very private person can become a very public figure, with star billing, not in spite of being wholly unsuited to public display, but because of being wholly unsuited to public display. Instead of his shyness or inhibitions or quirky awkwardness being a drawback, they become a positive blessing. On television it is precisely these private peculiarities that the public love since they add verisimilitude to that charade of intimacy, that make-believe pretence of a person-to-person conversation, which is of the essence of successful television communication.

Their very lack of professionalism, of glibness, of public charisma of the old sort, reassures the viewer that he is not being addressed as if he were at a public meeting. A stammer, therefore, can become the highest television accomplishment—remember Patrick Campbell with David Frost—since what better guarantee of a performer's private credentials as a strictly amateur public speaker can there be than a speech defect?

WHAT HAS ALL THIS TO DO with the intellectual on the "box"? A great deal. For the first time in history the manner of a remote and ineffectual don, the diffidence bred of life in an ivory tower, the whispering accents of the academic cloister, the *sotto voce* asides of a Common Room conversation, the agonising silences of the solitary scholar, all these attributes and characteristics which previously would have been wholly unsuited to any form of mass communication are now enough to whet a producer's appetite. To be at home with words and ideas, without having developed the off-putting professionalism of the public man; to be articulate without being glib or smooth; to be clever in a private style—these are the combinations which television programmes require, and which the intellectual community, more than any other, can supply.

Of course not all intellectuals agree to appear on television any more than all loud-voiced vulgarians become demagogues. But for those who do, television offers easy money and easy fame. When silent films began it was enough to have a beautiful profile to become a household idol. Television's talk programmes now put a premium on an intelligent face and manner. What is said does not matter much. Style is all.

What the viewer wants from talk programmes is the appearance of intellectual activity, not its content. All that an intellectual has to do is to appear and look thoughtful, preferably in an interesting way, and string a few consecutive sentences together in a mildly coherent manner, and he is a famous man in the morning whom taxi-drivers are delighted to shake by the hand.

Such success as I have had on the "box" is due to my failure as mass communicator in the accepted sense. I am usually asked to appear—as on the BBC's *Talkback* programme—after having fired off some paradoxical squib in a newspaper or magazine. The subsequent script of the resulting television programme makes it absolutely clear that such intellectual merit as the original article may have had was totally absent from the talk programme. But what the viewers saw and heard was a controversial pundit giving a passably good performance as a controversial pundit. Such is the basis of television reputation. I do not complain. It pleases my vanity. But I am well aware that all I have got across is not my ideas but my personality.

This surely is the point. Television brings popular fame to a range of society that hitherto lay overcast in the shadows of obscurity. Most intellectuals are hopeless public speakers and dry up in front of a crowd. So long as mass communication required mastery of the arts of popular oratory, intellectuals were bound to remain unknown except to a minority. But today the most powerful medium of mass communication, at least so far as the discussion of ideas, political or otherwise, is concerned, favours the intellectual, precisely because he talks in a non-public way.

The irony is that although television carries mass communication beyond the dreams of the most masterful demagogue of old, it also demands of its successful practitioner a style and manner more appropriate to All Souls than the Albert Hall. The secret of success on this medium, which involves talking to millions, is skill in intimate conversation. Within a great many private persons there is a public figure eager to get out.

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So far as intellectuals are concerned, they now have their opportunity on television talk programmes, since intimate conversation is their peculiar delight and indulgence.

If Lytton Strachey had lived in the television age he would not have had to wait for Michael Holroyd to make him a household name. It would have been he, with his apotheosis of a private manner, who would have wowed the public, far more than Horatio Bottomley, the greatest platform spell-binder of the period. Whether Strachey would have been less harmful, however, is by no means so sure.

FINALLY, another personal reminiscence, about the significance of which I am again not certain. It was my fate or privilege recently to take part in an hour-long television debate with the American Negro writer, James Baldwin, in an ITV programme called *Something to Say*. It was, in my view—which was shared by the producer—exceptionally good television, in spite of Alan Brien's disapproval in a surprisingly unperceptive review in the *Sunday Times*. What it established—this is what television talks can do so well—is that verbal communication between someone like Baldwin and someone like me is absolutely impossible. Our failure to communicate was infinitely more significant than if we had succeeded in arguing in a rational manner. This was an occasion when the look on the faces—of differing kinds of incomprehension—told far more about the subject than any words could do.

Yet it took two writers to make the programme the success it was, since mutual incomprehension between two articulate men, both of whom are manifestly accustomed to the use of words, is obviously far more dramatic and memorable than it is between inarticulate performers at a loss for words. The stenographic script which I have now read makes me blush. But the programme itself was immensely satisfying to take part in, moving, exciting, even exhilarating, involving parts of one that never come into play in writing. We were not locked in argument, since our ideas never met at any point. But I was conscious, as I think Baldwin was, of a kind of interlocking at a deeper level, two differing experiences of life, two different—dare I say it—souls, grappling with each other in a communion that transcended words.

I do not know what the viewer saw. But I know what I felt. As our words took us farther apart, as people we grew closer together, and when the programme ended—an hour really is a long time on television—we tearfully embraced in genuine amity, like friends who had just passed through some joint ordeal. This was no meeting of minds, but it was unquestionably a meeting of something more important—a genuine intermingling, not of words or of ideas, but of two worlds, two life-styles, call it what you will.

This brings me back to my theme, since although there was nothing intellectually memorable about this programme, its success depended, as I say, on the two participants being entirely at ease with words and ideas. Two less practised talkers would never have been relaxed enough to transcend the failure of words. The success of this particular talk programme was that both performers were behaving naturally. But this is my point. For intellectuals, talking *is* natural, even in the most difficult of circumstances, which is why they can talk easily even on television, rather as the trained athlete can breathe easily even while running up hill.

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TELEVISION

"Let Me Finish, let me finish. . . ."

James Baldwin, Peregrine Worsthorne, Bryan Magee

WHAT DOES ONE actually hear when a discussion programme featuring reasonably intelligent conversationalists is televised? We asked Thames Television to give us a reasonably accurate transcript of the recent argumentative exchanges, broadcast in their *Something to Say* series (chaired by Bryan Magee), between James Baldwin and Peregrine Worsthorne, and the following are unedited excerpts, for what they are worth, from this text.

BRYAN MAGEE: Well, before I ask our two guests this evening to discuss this question face to face let's go more deeply into the standpoint in which each one is going to argue. Peregrine Worsthorne, why do you think that the black man is now as responsible for his plight, because plight is what it still is in most cases, as the whites?

WORSTHORNE: Well, first of all we actually talk about the ah plight of the black man in America.

MAGEE: Yes all right.

WORSTHORNE: Because of course there are different plights . . . .

MAGEE: Of course.

WORSTHORNE: And in Africa it isn't the same. But in in America I would have thought that the situation had almost been reached when legislation has ah been passed and civil rights has been established and when opportunities exist which the Negro ah is in not very much a worse position than any other so-called immigrant group has been in the United States, in the last hundred years. I quite agree a bit worse but not all that worse. I think it would now be possible for the American Negro to take advantage of the facilities. . . . In the middle of the 19th century other groups with tremendous ah handicaps, the Irish immigrants, the Jewish immigrants, the Italian immigrants, and so on, who suffered ghastly ah discrimination and oppression and economic exploitation, they made it—the Italian through a ah quite a mastery if you like of crime, the Irish through Tammany Hall politics, the Jews through great commercial skill—they all forced their way into the mainstream of American social political economic life, and I would have thought that the position had now reached ah where the Negroes could do something comparable, if they're determined to do so.

MAGEE: Well, thank you Peregrine Worsthorne. We must turn now to James Baldwin. . . . What is your answer to his charge that the Negroes have uniquely failed in the United States to work their way up from poverty in the way that all other immigrant groups have?

BALDWIN: Well the first thing I would say, we'll get to this later though, is up to . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . but we'll get to that as I say later. . . .

All of the civil rights legislation is absolutely meaningless, and it was meant to be meaningless, and furthermore, the situation of a black man or woman, or boy, in any Northern ghetto is this: the school, which is not responsible because it belongs to the city, to the board of education, is a shambles, and in which no one is educated and in which no one is meant to be educated—the house in which he lives belongs to a landlord who is not responsible for anything but whenever it's to collect his rent. Try to get through a one winter ah in a Harlem ghetto. This is not either the black man's fault. Where do you go to complain if you want to complain? And we might even discuss the situation in the Labour Unions, which are geared to keep black people in effect in their place. And if you were right if you were right about the generosity of the American people then Governor Wallace . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . his conference in Florida the other day and Nixon will not be President, I am talking about a system which is not only historical but actual, I am saying in effect that the white people without going into any further . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . at the moment have in their hands the means of production, and they have the power, and they intend to keep it. And furthermore would you not come to address yourself to at all, is what—this is a very serious question—happens to a people whose history has been utterly destroyed.

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And furthermore the high income niggers such as you're really talking about, are listen . . . I can name many high come . . . high . . . income niggers whose name you would recognise, who can buy a house anywhere . . . and do, and also . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . of them, by the population, by their neighbours, try to be Sammy Davis and raise your children. What we are trying to get at, what I'm trying to get at because I'm not talking about high incomes, I'm you see, what I'm what I'm trying to suggest is I reject that particular standard. I don't think a man's life is meant for that. I don't think. I'd rather die than be Richard Nixon. I would rather die than make it in the American terms. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Another small point indicative really of the lack of respect for words people use when they're debating these points. You talk about black ghettos. It's a totally inappropriate word to use. A ghetto which was the area imposed in central Europe on the Jews, was where rich and poor Jews were forced to live by law. There is no law in America or indeed no practice in America that makes rich Negroes live in the New York as-you-call-it "ghetto." You are just using the word in a propaganda sense as an equivalent to slum, and of course we know that ah the emotive terms of ghetto means that the whites are behaving abominably as the whites, as the Christians behaved against the Jews. But there is nothing to stop you living wherever you want in the United States, and indeed you do live when you're there wherever you want as indeed does any other black man who has got the money to live in other areas. It is these kind of mis-use, this propaganda use of words that seems to me to be part of the whole hysterical campaign in America of black power. . . .

BALDWIN: Would you prefer it if I use the word Kasbah? I stick to the word ghetto, and ghetto is the place you can't move out of. I'll go further than that,

(INTERRUPTED) . . . .

WORSTHORNE: But how have you moved out of it? . . .

BALDWIN: You talking about me, Jimmy Baldwin? . . .

WORSTHORNE: Well, haven't you moved out of it?

BALDWIN: No I haven't. There is no way for any black man to move out of it. Now wait a minute, I know my country a little bit. I say ghetto, and I say ghetto because you can't move out, and I'll tell you why you can't move out. The landlord knows whether you're Harry Belafonte or Jimmy Baldwin or my young nephew. There are many places you can move to, if I buy a house I pay 3000 more than you will, and if . . . but my nephew tries at the rented apartment, he has to put up with things that you would never put up with, because it is a ghetto, he can't move out. . . . Let us say you're a school teacher, let us say you are a grocer, let us say you have children. Whatever it is, you're a menace, because the whole town knows that you are going to vote, and if that when you do vote, that is to say, when you get to the registrars office 'cos you don't manage to vote, your houses are bombed, do you think all those housing of children was some aberration, all this is a policy, designed to keep . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . in America, a nigger in his place. As long as we pick the cotton, and lie on the track, and build the cities, from nothing for nothing, that was all right. But once you see a black human being, a human being behind that mask, then you call that . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . ministry of yours which enslaved us in the first place, and which intends to keep us slaves forever. And I tell you, I tell you frankly, I speak with knowledge, Jimmy Baldwin, I reject your theology, your history, your morality by which you don't live, your Gods and your standards and in total all of it, lock stock and barrel, because you don't live by them and I know that you don't live by them by the way that you treat me.

MAGEE: Well, I suspect that this is really eloquent rhetoric, meaning that you aren't genuinely trying to look at the truth. It is not true that Negroes do not vote in the United States, the proof . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . .

BALDWIN: . . . story I told you . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . ah . . . I'm perfectly prepared to agree that in the South . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . .

BALDWIN: And I ask you to . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . In the South the situation is extremely difficult, and indeed all over America it may be and it is extremely difficult, but you can't simply pretend that Negroes who vote are shot down or hosed down . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . how . . . of course I have . . . and I've read a lot of propaganda in them too . . . How many how many black mayors are there in Northern cities? How many black representatives are there in the legislative council! Well don't just sigh. I mean are there any, or aren't there any? Are there any? Is it possible for any Negro to get elected to get successfully elected to high office in the United States. Is it or is it not? You answer me that question!

BALDWIN: Oh I answer that question. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Or are they hosed out?

BALDWIN: . . . depends which nigger it is.

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WORSTHORNE: Well of course it depends on what niggers do, ah . . . which nigger it is. You can't elect a non-individual. Of course it depends on who it is.

BALDWIN: It is very easy to put a nigger in the window, very easy indeed. Edward Brooke, for example, does not represent black people in America at all.

WORSTHORNE: Are you saying that anybody who gets elected who is black, isn't any longer black? . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . .

BALDWIN: . . . if he is black, if he is black, his career is in danger, and it will not last long or hasn't . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

WORSTHORNE: Every elected politician has an insecure life . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . . Roy Jenkins would be the first to admit it. Not just a black man. This is democracy . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: I refuse, I refuse, I refuse the proposition. I refuse the equation, 'cos what you are what you are avoiding is what I insist on. Colour is a fact.

WORSTHORNE: Certainly.

BALDWIN: It is a fact of my life because I had to live a certain life because I am black. It is a fact that your life, because you see me in a certain way, because I am black, and it it amounts from the point of view of white people to a kind of absolute blindness. You would never treat a dog the way I watch you treat black people. You talk about democracy. How can you talk about democracy to me?

WORSTHORNE: But you can't talk to me about how I treat black people. You have absolutely no idea how I treat black people. You have no evidence. You're simply making a racist assumption . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . . Treat you like a dog? Well I don't usually spend an hour talking to my dog, or my cat.

BALDWIN: . . . let us look . . . let us look at. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . It is purely a racist remark to say that I treat you like a dog . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . . Have you any evidence that I treat you like a dog? . . .

BALDWIN: Let us make it very clear.

WORSTHORNE: Why make these ludicrous remarks? . . .

BALDWIN: Let us make it very clear that I have absolutely nothing personal against you.

WORSTHORNE: Well then why do you say I am . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: . . . I am talking about your history. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Well, let us not talk about these generalisations. Let us talk about actuality. . . .

BALDWIN: . . . A generalisation? . . .

WORSTHORNE: You know perfectly well that people don't treat you like a dog. Why do you go round shouting at people? . . .

BALDWIN: You mean me?

WORSTHORNE: Well, of course I mean you. I mean you. I'm talking about individuals, not talking about these abstractions.

BALDWIN: I am not talking about . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

WORSTHORNE: I am sure that there are white people who treat black people like dogs. And judging by the propaganda which you lent your great authority to the Black Panther propaganda, you wish to treat my people like pigs. So far as an Englishman is concerned, it is worse to treat people like a pig than like a dog, so you don't get any benefit there. On the whole there are enormous numbers of white people who are leaning over backwards not to treat black people "like dogs". Why you have to go on shouting and saying white people treat black people like dogs. Some do, some don't. A lot of people don't, increasingly people don't. Why not recognise it? . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: . . . let us . . . clarify . . . let us clarify, let us clarify. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Let us talk of racist propaganda . . . .

BALDWIN: Let us clarify my terms, let us clarify my terms. . . .

WORSTHORNE: I hope so.

BALDWIN: You know very well I'm not talking about you.

WORSTHORNE: How do I know it? You said white people. I am a white person. How do I know?

BALDWIN: Look, I only met you twice.

WORSTHORNE: Exactly, then why do you lead to. . . ?

BALDWIN: I have absolutely no reason to attack you. We're not here to talk about each other. You know very well what I'm talking about.

WORSTHORNE: I certainly do not. . . .

WORSTHORNE: The American Press, if it can find an example of the police shooting a Negro, will not only shoot one Negro, it will say there would probably be 5 killed. The great American Press is exaggerating the iniquities of the whites to the blacks, even—I don't believe you can disagree—the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, the liberal papers, are wholly on the side of the American Negroes in this area, I mean, maybe not in other areas. But if they can find an atrocity by the white police against a black, they will

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certainly not fail to record it. And in fact, on the record, they will report it and duplicate it, in fact quadruplicate it, if that is the right word. So the idea that if they were being you talk about ah in America where American Negroes are being flung into prison and are being killed, if this was happening, do you not believe that it would be headline news all over the world, every day? Of course it isn't happening, and you know it's not happening.

BALDWIN: Have you heard any news lately about . . . (NAME). . . .? What news have you heard about American prisons lately. . . ?

Don't take my word for it, and I'm not making it into a racial thing. But in fact don't take my word, check out, check the record out, check out who was in prison in my country. I will tell you who. Take my word . . . the Mexicans, the Puerto Ricans and the Blacks, those are the people who are in prison. What do you think is happening in prisons all over America? Why do you think it's happening? I'm not being a racist, which is beneath me in any case. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Ah the proportion of Negroes in jail . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . . prison. . . .

BALDWIN: Listen I don't want to hear that . . . don't want to hear it. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . is higher . . . American. . . .

BALDWIN: I don't want to hear. . . .

WORSTHORNE: You may not want to hear it but the English viewers want to hear it. . . .

BALDWIN: I don't want to . . . I don't want to hear that, I don't want to hear that. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Every law firm, white law firm in America, if they could find a Negro, they would be very glad to have him. . . .

BALDWIN: I don't want to hear it. . . .

MAGEE: Now I'm going to intervene to put one final question ah to James Baldwin which, I think, we must say something about before we come to the end of the programme and that's this. Even if all that you say is true, what do you think should actually be done by the coloured people in the United States to alleviate this?

BALDWIN: Now if I answer that question, first of let me answer the last thing. . . .

MAGEE: Well, I don't want you to go back, I want you to talk about what you've done. . . .

BALDWIN: We we . . . Britons. . . . When I said I want to hear that . . . I know those . . . I know the price they paid. I know what happens to them because they are in neither community. They're neither white nor black. Now that that's all I want to say. . . .

(ALL SHOUTING AT ONCE. . . .)

BALDWIN: I'm taken now as Jimmy. I, Jimmy, was assured that I was nothing until a white man found me, that I had no language nor use . . . no culture and no human value, and I was very lucky that the missionaries came and found me, and saved me from that terrible place called Africa, and civilised me and brought me over in this city so I could pick their cotton and line their tracks etcetera etcetera etcetera. I was very lucky now. When I try to protect my child, from this particular species of propaganda I am called by white people ah a dangerous fire-brand, an irresponsible Negro ah ah. . . .

MAGEE: Jimmy I hate to . . . Jimmy you're not answering my question . . . I I'm sorry, are you going to get there. . . ?

BALDWIN: Yes, I'm trying to answer it. Now in order to do what you seem to be demanding of the black do, one has to attack the institutions, all of them which, in fact, are in your hands. You seem to assume that in some . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . way which gives me no reason to believe in—not only your history—that you will give me the opportunity. I don't believe you would give it to me. I don't believe you can give it to me. You can't give it even to your own. I know you can't give it to me. Therefore I've had to find a way of taking it. I don't know what way that will be. I'm not a Black Panther. I'm not a propagandist. I am not a violent man. But I do know that no matter what it may cost me and no matter what it may cost you I am not going to let you do to my children what you have done to me. Direct action is what is demanded. But when we try to do direct action you call this racist. If we were white and blowing up Detroit, you would understand it. When the Jews blew up, when they blow up to get Israel, you understood that. You understand everything when white people stand up. You understand your revolution, but you don't understand ours, and that's because history makes you feel in some occult way that we are not like you. There is a way in which we're not like you of course. The Irish don't like the Poles, the Russians don't like the Yugoslavs, but we are human beings and a child is a child. All this is really that children. . . .

MAGEE: Ah I'm only going to give you each another couple of minutes and then we must come to the end, so if you have . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . a chance. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . talking like Jimmy, I can't understand how you should say that the whites

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don't give you, Jimmy, a chance. You've had a chance and you've made a splendid job. You're a great writer and you certainly demonstrated that ah as speaking as Jimmy that you've done very well. And although I don't think you've got any children but if you have any children I can only hope that they will do just as well. So I think it seems to me, illustrative of the whole theme of this discussion, that you make a point and you don't see how bizarre it must sound to many people that you, here you are, you've done very well and and I'm . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

(SHOUTING OVER ONE ANOTHER . . . .)

. . . I'm congratulating you. I can't see how you can say that an American Negro, like yourself, has no chance. This is just denied by the very fact of your presence, by the very fact of you being a great man, and I would like to think that ah many more American Negroes would live by your example and by your words.

BALDWIN: But you must understand that in the lexicon of the American Republic, a cat like me is a bad nigger, and a very bad example to someone you want to keep enslaved. And I will tell you something else that in my generation (and I'm not young) that there'll be one of me and thousands of us perished.

WORSTHORNE: But why don't you say: look at me, I've made it, and I'm . . . have escaped and I've . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: I've escaped. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . Dwell on this point rather than find some despair.

BALDWIN: What I am saying. . . .

WORSTHORNE: There is such a source of hope in your own personal story. Why did it have to be, why did it have to be distorted, in this language of despair? Why?

BALDWIN: Everything goes except, except the power, except the vital interests of the Western world. Now I've always been a slave in the Western world. Whether you think it's propaganda or not, I think that history will bear me out.

WORSTHORNE: How can you say you always . . .? You've never been a slave in the Western world. It is just an inaccurate statement. You've never been a slave, have you?

BALDWIN: Who?

WORSTHORNE: You.

BALDWIN: You mean me, Jimmy?

WORSTHORNE: When you said, you . . . "I have always been a slave," why do you talk in this way?

BALDWIN: Well let us say we then. To clarify the terms.

WORSTHORNE: So far as your own generation is concerned, none of you have been slaves. So why do you make a false statement which seems to me to be ah . . . I mean just . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . false. But am I expected to say, yes of course you've always been a slave? Is that what you're accustomed to when you talk to all these white liberals? They say, oh Jimmy have you always been a slave, of course you've always been . . . You've never been a slave, and your father wasn't a slave. Why do we have to listen to this crap?

BALDWIN: Because you don't know my father . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . . Listen, listen, my father was. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . a free man. . . .

BALDWIN: My father was anything but a free man.

WORSTHORNE: Well he was not a slave.

BALDWIN: I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon. A man, who is strapped in, I repeat, a ghetto, who makes 27 dollars a week and can't make any more, not because he's stupid, who worked life away in a factory all of his life to support 9 children and cannot get out of the ghetto and cannot get out of the factory his only refuge is in Jesus Christ and this is not my father's fault, that man is a slave.

WORSTHORNE: A wage slave you mean?

BALDWIN: No, I mean a slave.

WORSTHORNE: But in a sense that any very poor. . . .

BALDWIN: No, I do not mean that. . . .

WORSTHORNE: But you . . . you have got out. . . .

BALDWIN: Listen let us leave Jimmy Baldwin for the moment. . . .

(TALKING OVER ONE ANOTHER. . . .)

WORSTHORNE: Your father's generation people got out.

BALDWIN: No, they did not get out. My father left South after a lynch mob wave. My father left the South to save his life. They were hanging niggers from trees in uniforms in 1919 and my father left the South therefore. Millions of us left the South therefore. And came to Chicago where we perish like rats, in New York where you perish like rats.

WORSTHORNE: So did the Irish.

BALDWIN: No, the Irish, the Irish, the Irish. I'm so tired of hearing of the Irish. The Irish are white.

WORSTHORNE: Yes, I know, but they also perished "like rats" and they were also in miserable conditions.

BALDWIN: Listen my friend, my friend, my friend. Angela Davis for example.

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WORSTHORNE: Well let's not use Angela Davis. You'll call that propaganda too.

BALDWIN: I'm a very famous man, and I can pay my rent. If my son or my nephew or my wife or my daughter walk into any room in the Western world, and nobody knows their name, she's just another nigger, just another nigger. Don't make no difference. If your son, your daughter, your wife walk . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . . they're white. You may have been starving you may, you . . . your . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . may have died in the potato famine. But that is not written on your brow. I wouldn't know you were Irish unless you say so. But to be black in a white man's world, it's quite a different thing. But that's what you were trying to avoid.

WORSTHORNE: No, I do accept that I think it is ah, it is a a great difference to to to other ah disadvantaged groups that the black skin is a disadvantage. Of course I recognise it. It would be ludicrous not to. But I really don't see that it's reasonable for you to argue that this is something which is . . . ah which can't be got over up to a certain point, I mean. . . .

BALDWIN: Which point is that. . .?

WORSTHORNE: You're perfectly right that there will always be a difficulty. Well, not always, there will be for quite a long time a difficulty extra special difficulty for black people to make it in any kind of white man's culture . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: Why's that?

WORSTHORNE: Why's what?

BALDWIN: Mmm Mmm.

WORSTHORNE: I suppose it's because of the fact which I was ah, I suppose, indiscreet enough to mention before, that white men don't really respect black men in the same way as they respect other skins. There is this prejudice. I would be perfectly prepared indeed . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . admit it is more difficult for blacks, much more difficult. But this seems to me no reason to despair ah no reason to reach the stage where you do, which is to say the only answer is to kill white people.

BALDWIN: And I said that?*

*ED. NOTE.—The disputed reference here is to a passage in James Baldwin's latest book, *No Name in the Street* (1971, published by Michael Joseph, London, and Dial Press, New York). On pp. 163–164 Baldwin wrote the following: "it is not necessary for a black man to hate a white man, or to have any particular feelings about him at all, in order to realise that he must kill him. Yes, we have come, or are coming to this, and there is no point in flinching before the prospect of this exceedingly cool species of fratricide—which prospect white people, after all, have brought on themselves."

WORSTHORNE: No, but I think that you let yourself. . . .

BALDWIN: . . . people who have said that. I beg your pardon.

WORSTHORNE: I think you have lent your support for the Black Panther movement which does say that.

BALDWIN: No, but have I ever said that?

WORSTHORNE: Well I'm . . . ah. . . .

BALDWIN: Have they said that?
(TALKING OVER ONE ANOTHER. . . .)

WORSTHORNE: I read their publications, and they say that violence and killing and bombing. . . .

BALDWIN: Well, as a matter of fact what they've said. . . .

WORSTHORNE: They have said you said. . . .

BALDWIN: The black man and the . . . (INAUDIBLE). . . if we could get on that for a moment . . . came into existence as a Black Panther party for self-defence.

WORSTHORNE: . . . said they'd do it.

BALDWIN: Will you let me finish? As a Black Panther party for self-defence in West Oakland which is in the state of California . . . and I know Oakland very much the same way I know Harlem. I know the cops in the ghetto and I know precisely what happens to the helpless. No cop will ever treat you as long as you live the way any cop will treat any black person, anywhere in the world really, but I'm talking about my country. And if you watch . . . (INAUDIBLE) . . . being beaten up, thrown into jail, ah dying day in and day out, which is a truth. Whether or not you want to call it propaganda that's up to you. I'm telling you what I have seen with these own, with my own, big eyes. Something has to happen. You've got to protect yourself and . . .(INTERRUPTED). . . .

BALDWIN: The source of hope, my children, is a source of terror for you.

WORSTHORNE: Not at . . . you, you can't believe this. You can't believe, if you really think it, that the whites are terrified.

BALDWIN: Prove me wrong.

WORSTHORNE: They're terrified of your weakness not of your strength.

BALDWIN: Prove me wrong.

WORSTHORNE: I think that the tragedy of the white man in relation to the black is that it's the black weakness which is creating a sense of guilt amongst the whites. It's the black inability to take advantage of the possibilities, in that you're creating a despair and a frustration among the whites, though the opportunity is there. . . .

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BALDWIN: The opportunity to what?

WORSTHORNE: The opportunity to do what you have done, the opportunity to ah make a tolerable. . . .

BALDWIN: Because you think I love. . . .

WORSTHORNE: I think . . . God knows if . . . (INTERRUPTED) . . . that he would be for your children. . . . Things are getting better and I think it's the most, I think it's the most bizarre and perverted role to counsel the young people that next generation after you in America. . . .

BALDWIN: Do you . . . do you think. . . .

WORSTHORNE: . . . of your colour. . . . There is nothing for them to be but hosed down and shot down. This is not only untrue, it's a kind of corruption of the spirit . . . (INTERRUPTED). . . .

MAGEE: Peregrine, let James Baldwin have a last word in, and then we must finish.

BALDWIN: Do you think, do you think that all those slaves, I repeat slaves, survived so long, because their eldest counselled them despair? Do you think that I would counsel my child despair? And let me tell you something. My kid knows what I'm talking about. You don't know what I'm talking about. I'm telling you that I'm going to raise my children to be men and women in spite of you, that's all I'm saying, and whatever it costs me or you. But I do know that the doctrine under which you really speak, which is called white supremacy, has come to an end. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Look, it is not a doctrine I would. . . .

BALDWIN: Let me finish, let me finish, let me finish. . . .

WORSTHORNE: Not on a bad note, I hope. . . .

BALDWIN: No.

MAGEE: Finish, then we all finish.

BALDWIN: Yes. I'm only saying this the doctrine under which you speak, no matter what you want to call it, is betrayed by the way . . . the use of the word "give". You do not give anybody the opportunity really, you let him take it—you know. All one's asking—you know—is to be let alone. But in order to be let alone (INCOMP) . . . take over our schools and the ah labour unions and we have changed the shape of society, and in order to do that we are going to have a tremendous resistance even on the part of our friends. But that is what is happening. That is what my kid knows, and your kid and my kid may get to be friends.

MAGEE: Well thank you very much, James Baldwin. Thank you, Peregrine Worsthorne. Goodnight.

(MUSIC)

Old Maps and New

There are spaces
where infringements are possible.
There are notices that say:
Trespassers will be welcome.

Pity leaks through the roof
of the Labour Exchange.
In the Leader's pocket,
wrapped in the plans for the great offensive,
are sweets for the children
and a crumpled letter.

There are spaces still to be filled
before the map is completed—
though these days it's only
in the explored territories
men write, sadly,
Here live monsters.

Norman MacCaig

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The Quest for Meaning

A Sociologist's Reflections — By RAYMOND ARON

NO ONE CAN CROSS the threshold of this august institution without emotion. Even if age ought to have convinced him that, so far as he and his work are concerned, the die is cast, even if he has already tasted some of the ambiguous satisfactions that academic honours provide, he whom you have summoned among you by your votes cannot shake off a sense of uneasiness. I seem to be feeling all the pangs of an examinee while expressing to you a sense of gratitude the genuineness of which I ask you not to doubt.

This gratitude is the deeper in that certain of my activities might have seemed hardly compatible with the calling of a professor of the Collège de France. Faced with so many scholars and men of learning, I cannot fight off a kind of bad conscience, and find myself unable to feel covered by Max Weber's defence of "high journalism"; the German sociologist tended readily to criticise his conceited colleagues, was an occasional contributor to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and invited the distinguished professors of the past not to look down on those on whom the ungrateful task of instantaneous, almost simultaneous, comment on events of the day was professionally imposed.

I prefer to choose on my behalf Marcel Mauss, who was so closely associated with my family, who for years was an editor of Jaurès' *l'Humanité*. I do not claim that he would have approved of the way in which I have tried in writing and in speech at once to combine and to distinguish between the activities of the citizen and those of the teacher. But at least he advised the sociologist, in spite of all the hazards involved, not to shy away from taking as objects of his study those things that kindle passions and on which the parties divide. "The public does not permit us," he wrote, "to concern ourselves exclusively with what is easy, amusing, curious, strange, belongs to the past and is free of danger because it is concerned with societies that are dead or distant from our own. It wants valid studies related to the present." Valid? Let us more modestly say interesting or, to use the term current with the young in Germany or the United States, *relevant*.

Alfred Sauvy followed that advice. He belongs to a long line of products of the *École Polytechnique*, ranging from Auguste Comte to Jacques Rueff and Maurice Allais, who came to economics, demography, or sociology out of concern for the public good and a desire to reform the state or society, believing a detour by way of science to be indispensable to effective action. It was a rather long detour, consisting of the six volumes of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, and the two volumes each of *l'Ordre social* and the *Théorie générale de la Population*; but the ultimate objective of that long and patient effort was never lost sight of.

THIS IS *the text of the "Leçon Inaugurale," "De la Condition Historique Du Sociologue," delivered recently at the Collège de France from the "Chaire de Sociologie de la Civilisation Moderne."*

From Mauss to Sauvy

ALFRED SAUVY seems to me to be atypical of those reforming Polytechnicians. Auguste Comte described with remorseless detail the order to be finally achieved by humanity. My friend Jacques Rueff admires the possible perfection of economic mechanisms perpetually disturbed by the intervention of statesmen. Even Maurice Allais sometimes succumbs to the fascination of his models. But in the case of the youngest of these septuagenarians (still a rugby and motorcycle enthusiast), he is always on the lookout for new ideas at the frontiers of the established disciplines, and is more loyal than he believes himself to be to the heritage of the Enlightenment, since he maintains a tireless and often disappointed confidence in the final triumph of democracy,

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the day when citizens will enjoy the benefit of complete and objective information.

All his life Sauvy has fought a pitiless and insidious enemy—Malthusianism—which he pursues in all its transformations, a hydra-headed monster whose perpetually renascent heads he cuts off. This crusader has only one weapon, scientific analysis of the consequences for the nation of a declining population, the failure of the generations to renew themselves; he has made indefatigable use of that weapon, and does so still.

As an economist he contributed to the establishment of the first Institute of Statistics, because he had himself experienced the blindness of the state. When Léon Blum introduced the legislation for the forty-hour week he did not know that the average working week was already between forty-four and forty-five hours, a fact he learned only at the Riom Trial. Alfred Sauvy has faith in the efficacy of objective knowledge; he resents ignorance, dissipates myths, indefatigably recalls numbers and percentages. Both in his main work and in his occasional articles he refutes *les idées reçues*, less by dialectics than by statistics.

Nevertheless, as his own *leçon inaugurale* (April 10, 1959) seems to me to show, it is demography, in which theory and practice are inseparably linked, the Institute and the review *Population* that remain the centre of his life and his thought. Every science tends to create an image of reality different from that with which our spontaneous perception presents us. Sociology inevitably surprises us by the interpretation of our own society that it imposes on us. Sauvy enjoys demonstrating to the French, who believe they are individually enriching themselves by limiting the number of their children, that they have collectively impoverished themselves and that they all ended by paying for it by defeat and invasion, the price they paid for their mistake. Thus, in a sense, his is a moral science, since it exposes the great illusion of *l'enrichissement par l'avarice*.

Continuing the work of Adolphe Landry, he has carried out a task that required a combination of scholar and publicist in a single individual; thanks to him, his books, and articles, we think of the relations between the size of the population and the development of the economy, of the history of France, otherwise than we should if he had not forced us to see the common cause underlying apparently diverse social and linguistic, military and domestic behaviour. He communicated his anti-Malthusian obsession even to those who wished to free themselves of it. The title of all his books might be that given by Keynes to one of his: *Essays in Persuasion.*

History advances swiftly. How many of my listeners think of the countries that we now call underdeveloped, of the growth rate of the world's population, of the extrapolations that certain demographers are fond of? Will there be 6,000 or 7,000 million mouths to feed in the world by the year 2000? The spectre of Malthus once more haunts us. For his part, Sauvy continues to reject oliganthropy, the fearfulness, the contraction in the face of life and the future, that often paralyses nations that shrink from generation to generation. So far as France is concerned, he is probably right; many Frenchmen persist in believing that our country suffers from an excessive birth-rate and are incapable of understanding that the number of jobs rises as fast, or perhaps faster as that of workers even in the computer age. The prosperity of the West German Republic after absorbing some thirteen million refugees once more confirms that there is no wealth but men (at any rate, when society possesses resources sufficient to train them). Elsewhere, in Asia and Latin America, he admits that the situation is different, and rightly insists that there are population *problems*, not *a* population problem.

In spite of everything, I sometimes think of an anti-Sauvy who would denounce the material and moral ravages of over-population, an idea that is strictly indefinable, with the same ardour, talent, and persistence, that Sauvy has shown in the service of the opposite doctrine.

AS A DEMOGRAPHER, Sauvy devoted the second volume of his *General Theory of Population* to the sociology of the size of societies. As an economist, he declares himself to be a socialist. He illustrates a certain kinship between sociology and socialism on which Emile Durkheim had insisted.

Sociology, or if you prefer it, the philosophical pre-sociology of the last century, in so far as it was reflection on the crisis of modern society, originated from the industry and democracy that were its subject-matter. This is as true of Saint-Simon as it is of Tocqueville and Marx. Socialist doctrines in the first half of the nineteenth century were also responses to the double heritage of the Industrial and the French Revolutions. The Industrial Revolution, linked with liberal capitalism, seemed to remove the major activity of our age from all conscious organisation. The French Revolution contained a contradiction. In the name of equality before the law, it claimed to do away with privileges of birth and the transmission of quality (in the sense in which one speaks of men of quality) but it subjected the majority to the yoke of poverty, the constraints of production, and differences in prestige that could be distinguished from renewed forms of age-old inequalities only with the aid of

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ideologies ranging from Social Darwinism to Meritocracy.

Thus, the subject-matter of sociology—the science of modern society—is the social field as distinct from the traditional fields of politics and economics. Similarly socialism, as a doctrine of action, aims at overcoming the contradiction between political equality and economic inequalities by changes affecting the very constitution of society. Littré still states that the term "socialism" applies to theories of reform extending beyond the political to the social field. He cites Communism, Mutualism, and Fourierism under this heading; Marxism is not included. The social, as distinct from the political field (according to Littré) covers the "conditions that, leaving aside forms of government, affect the intellectual, moral and material development of the popular masses."

The Durkheimians of the second generation (Marcel Mauss, François Simiand, and Maurice Halbwachs) remained essentially faithful to this inspiration. They would probably have described socialism, in accordance with the Saint-Simonian tradition, less by reference to property than to organisation of the state control of economic power. Durkheim, as Marcel Mauss wrote:

> was profoundly opposed to all class and national warfare. He wanted change only for the benefit of society as a whole and not for any one of its parts, even if the latter had numbers and strength on its side. . . . Even during the War, he was one of those who put no hope on what is called the working class organised internationally.

Mauss himself rejected the opposition established by revolutionary socialism between "Capitalist and Collectivist societies" as "false and dialectical", bearing the mark of an intemperate rationalism. Similarly he refused to agree that there is a radical opposition between Reform and Revolution. He regarded a reform of the inheritance law, for instance, requiring the return to the state of inherited capital sixty years after the death of its owner as a "*petite révolution.*" And he concluded:

> To those who believe that no revolution is capable of turning society inside out like a glove, and that the idea of total social transformation is false, revolution can be regarded only as a series of more or less radical reforms of this type, varying in magnitude and speed.

In their spontaneous hostility to violence and the class struggle, these socialist sociologists tended to stress consensus rather than the fertility or inevitability of conflicts; they remained good democrats and, perhaps for lack of worthy interlocutors, felt no need to prolong a dialogue with the Marxists. In the heat of the moment immediately after the First World War, the friend of Lucien Herr and of Jean Jaurès spoke of the "Soviets" as institutions "invented out of thin air by a society, a nation, that has never known what a citizen is, or what democracy or even law is."

ALFRED SAUVY'S SOCIALISM has some things in common with that of the Durkheimians: the rejection of violence, the indifference to exegesis of sacred texts, the lack of dogmatism, the sense of individual liberty. But, while the vague formula of organisation led Durkheim and his followers to fail to appreciate the full implications of the alternative between a planned economy and the free market, Sauvy continually hesitates between the free market (the injustices and inequities of which he denounces) and the controlled economy (the virtues of which he has sometimes over-estimated)—the free market as it works, not in the empyrean of pure theory, but in the real world of private ownership, and the controlled economy, controlled not by men in the sole service of the common good, but by partisans or technocrats who are also the representatives of interests, including those of their own positions of power. Thus, he rejects all the models that have been tried without losing his faith in socialism.

The abolition of social classes and of the power conferred by the accumulation of material possession is the well-defined basis on which he wants socialism to be rethought.[1] He is not greatly concerned with combating the capitalism of the present day, the "shameful capitalism" that in his view nobody would support but for the fear of Communism and the lack of any alternative system, to which alone it owes its survival. Finally, and in this he is more than ever a *franc-tireur* on the margin of the political parties, he freely borrows from all the systems the practices and mechanisms that combined would produce the perfect mixture, to use the Platonic phrase. The question remains whether statesmen have as much liberty as scholars in their studies, and if any society can combine the merits and avoid the faults of institutions, ideologies, and factions that clash in dubious combat.

I SHOULD LIKE to say, without being paradoxical, that my criticism of the Durkheimians of the second generation was less of their so unsubversive socialism than of the serenity of their outlook, their unshakeable optimism, their indifference to Marx, their tendency to neglect the sometimes pitiless struggles between classes, parties, and ideas. Between 1929 and 1956, between the Great Depression and Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Congress, the men of my generation

[1] Alfred Sauvy, *Le Socialisme en liberté* (1970).

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did not resist Marxism, or Marxism-Leninism, with the same calm certitude.

Durkheim considered political revolutions to be superficial, expensive, and more theatrical than serious. This shocks me no less than it shocks the Marxists. "Expensive" the revolutions of 1789 and 1917 certainly were; and, as has been pointed out again and again, the revolutionaries were theatrical in certain respects, reproducing the exploits of mythical ancestors while trying to open a path to the future. The revolutionaries of the eighteenth century wore the toga and shod themselves with the cothurnus of Brutus; they were the actors of history, in the double meaning of the term. But "superficial" these revolutions certainly were not. It could be that the events of May 1968 were exclusively theatrical in nature; but then there was no revolution, except perhaps in university lecture halls.

The Shock of Events

FROM 1930 ONWARDS I was teaching and studying at Cologne University and in Berlin, and I had an almost physical sense of the approach of historic storms. History was again on the move, in Toynbee's phrase. I was permanently marked by that experience, and it inclined me towards an active pessimism. Once and for all I ceased to believe that history obeys the imperatives of reason or the wishes of men of good will. I lost faith and, not without effort, kept hope. I discovered an enemy whom I tirelessly pursue—totalitarianism—an enemy no less insidious than Malthusianism. In all forms of fanaticism, even those motivated by idealism, I suspect a new transformation of the monster.

In pre-Hitler Germany, the rising tide of Nazism, the revelation of politics in its diabolical essence, forced me to think against myself, against my intimate personal preferences. It inspired me with a kind of revolt against the teaching of the universities, the spiritualism of the philosophers, and the tendency of certain sociologists to ignore the impact of political systems, on the pretext of clinging to deep and enduring realities. So, while Hitler's seizure of power heralded a world war, parliamentary manoeuvres were superficial. So economic processes were secondary, while the Great Depression, with its millions of unemployed, continued because of mistakes that even undergraduate students of the present day would have no difficulty in perceiving. François Simiand, in his little book on the 1929 crisis,[2] drew the consequences of his theory of the cyclical movements of prices which he thought necessary for economic progress, and he emphasised its beneficial effects in spite of the suffering caused to the masses. He seemed hardly to envisage the possibility of an economic system without crisis, or to grant governments the capacity to acquire effective control of these fluctuations. In his view, the so-called Soviet experiment was more of political than economic interest. The mood of my generation accorded ill with this outlook, at once resigned yet confident, which preserved a kinship with the positivism of Auguste Comte; for it was an acceptance of a quasi-natural social determinism combined with an ineradicable optimism about the long-term outcome.

I SOMETIMES WONDER about the causes of my allergy to the thought of Durkheim and my elective affinity with that of Max Weber. Certainly these affective reactions, the unfairness of which I admit, are partly explained by circumstances. Thanks to Max Weber, I believed in the possibility of combining scientific curiosity with political concern, or detached reflection with resolute action, without confusing them.

I had started studying the works of Marx for the purpose of clarifying my social and economic opinions, in the hope that the foreseeable course of history would instruct my aspirations. Although I came to an opposite conclusion, I did not for that reason cease to take the problems raised by Marxism and renewed by Max Weber as the central theme of my reflections.

Under the influence of Léon Brunschvicg's neo-Kantianism, I found myself back in a familiar world, reading the followers of the south-west German school. The radical distinction between being and becoming, between the relationship to values and value judgments, between the decisive selection of facts and the universally valid causal relationship—all these classical formulas seemed to me to be a transposition to the social sciences of epistemological ideas worked out by more assured sciences. They seemed to guarantee both the scientific nature and the independence of the disciplines associated with the human world that is external to all of us but is nevertheless constituted by the meanings that we give things and beings.

A sort of pre-established harmony or, in more modest terms, an accordance of sensibility, seemed to me to exist between Max Weber's sociology—a sociology of conflict between classes, parties, and gods—and the living experience of a French-Jewish philosophy graduate who found himself in Berlin during the first months of the Third Reich. The struggles taking place within nations, or between nations, reached such a pitch of violence that we had the

[2] François Simiand, *Les fluctuations économiques à longue periode et la crise mondiale* (1932).

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feeling of being able to discern within our own societies *the Other*—whose knowledge gives us the chance to know ourselves. Tocqueville understood democratic man by reference to the aristocrat of the *ancien régime*, on whom, without betraying his ancestral loyalties, he delivered a judgment that was already the judgment of history. For lack of a familiarity with primitive societies for which books are no substitute, the Nazis (and later the ideologists of all creeds) took the place of "Persians."

Without any overriding vision in the midst of the tumult of events, and incapable of joining any particular faction, I wanted at least to live man's historical condition with complete lucidity. Max Weber's personal and philosophical experience provided me with both an example and a theory for this. He presented me with a dialectic of incomplete knowledge, contradictory values, adventurous decisions; and the Europe of the 1930s charged these abstract formulas with a tragic resonance. On the eve of the presentation of my thesis in 1938 Paul Fauconnet expressed surprise at the "note of pathos" struck in my *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, and questioned me about the reasons for my "anxiety." At the time, thinking of the immediate future, I was surprised at his surprise—or, rather, I felt indignant at the historical unconsciousness of professional sociologists.

Durkheim or Weber

I WOULD NOT have recalled these distant memories if the conflict between Durkheim and Weber did not, in my opinion, still have a topical and perhaps exemplary significance. Durkheim came to sociology from the philosophical question of the relations between individual and society, and Weber did so from the similarly philosophical question of the relations between knowledge and action.

Many scientific differences flow from these different starting-points. Durkheim defined socialism as state control of economic power, which is a characteristic of all modern régimes of the present day. He defined democracy as "the political form by which society attains the purest knowledge of itself." The larger the part played by deliberation, reflection, the critical spirit, in the conduct of public affairs, the more democratic a nation was. "It is not in only the past forty or fifty years that democracy has flowed freely; its rise has been continuous since the beginning of history . . . ." Weber, however, defined socialism by the specific characteristics of a non-capitalist system, the collective ownership of the instruments of production and planning. Similarly, he defined democracy by the presence of representative institutions and an organised struggle for power between rival parties (a form of political organisation that Durkheim, following Auguste Comte, regarded with some condescension). Durkheim, in short, stressed the features common to all modern societies, while Weber stressed the features peculiar to each system that constitute the issue in social or political battles.

Durkheim, searching for a morality and almost for a religion, made use of a concept of society that has roused protests varying from the indignant to the ironical. I recall his formulation:

> The choice must be made between God and society. I shall not here examine the reasons that can militate in favour of either choice, both of which are consistent. I admit that from my point of view the choice leaves me pretty indifferent, for I see in divinity nothing but society transfigured and thought of symbolically.

That society, the object or principle of feelings comparable to those inspired by the idea of God, is it the Tribe, the Nation, the Party, Humanity? Sociologists of the present day, whether believers or unbelievers, would, it seems to me, reject this amalgam at which the prophet of sociology arrived at the end of his quest for intellectual and moral reform.

Max Weber, however, studied social reality, not for the purpose of finding a basis or justification for moral or political imperatives, but to aid the individual in acquiring a consciousness of himself and his environment. Like Alfred Sauvy, he dreamt of being a counsellor to the prince. But Sauvy set himself objectives—a revival of the birth rate and the regulation of the business cycle—that were capable of commanding universal assent. Thus he succeeded from time to time in gaining the ear of the changing princes of our successive republics. Max Weber never advised any prince. He plunged into arguments of the type that are settled by violence rather than by words; his anger spared neither the Kaiser nor the revolutionaries of 1918. Thus to the end he remained a Heidelberg Machiavelli, available but solitary. Perhaps I already had a presentiment at that time that my impulses to action would be, perhaps rightly, punished by the same frustration.

IT WILL BE OBJECTED that the conflict between the two men applies less to the scientific aspect of their work than its philosophical intentions or implications. I quite agree. It would be wrong to attach too much importance to trenchant phrases such as "*Dieu ou la société*" formulated by the reformer rather than by the scholar. At bottom, Weber's definition of sociology (the product of German idealist philosophy and the economic and juridical theory of action) is consistent with the definition of the social, as distinct from the political and economic fields, as

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a result of the two revolutions, the French and the Industrial. Both, in spite of a different terminology, stress the socialisation of the individual, and bridge the opposition between the individual and society, wrongly thought of as entities external to each other. At the same time one sees the outlines of a synthesis of the two possible histories of sociology, one based on the great political and philosophical doctrines, and the other (traced by Paul Lazarsfeld and his pupils) based on the economic arithmetic of the British and the social statistics of the Germans.

There is no such thing at the present time as a sociology that could be taught in the way in which mathematics or physics are taught (or perhaps as I imagine them to be taught). On the one hand, there are sociologies of labour, education, religion, and on the other a sociological way of thinking that is expressed both in detailed surveys and attempts at global interpretation, both in micro- and in macro-sociology. None of the great sociologists of the last century, neither Alexis de Tocqueville nor still less Karl Marx, who was always in search of documentation and statistics, would have rejected the methods and results of what is called "empirical sociology." Only Auguste Comte, perhaps, would have thought that scrupulous enquiry into details hampered the view of the whole. Both Emile Durkheim and Max Weber engaged in investigations that amounted to what some today contemptuously describe as "microscopic" or empirical sociology—Durkheim in his *Suicide*, and Weber in his surveys of agricultural labour in East Prussia and of the productivity of industrial workers.

If there is a distinction between micro- and macro-sociology, it is connected with both the nature of the subject-matter and the state of the science. The results obtained by sectional sociologies do not automatically arrange themselves into systems. Society as a whole is not completely explained by the mechanism of which it is made up, and it cannot be reduced to the sum total of combination of these mechanisms. Present efforts to establish with scientific rigour the equivalents of the great doctrines of the past remain partial and arguable.

Does Weberian *Kritik*—criticism in the Kantian sense of the word—still preserve its significance? Certainly Weber's language has aged. Whether in regard to "comprehension", relationship to "values", or "bias", the scientific practice of the present day requires a different vocabulary, or a different interpretation of that vocabulary. But the essential themes of that criticism—the plurality of social systems and meanings, the construction of scientific objects based on the real but heterogeneous world, the limitations of science—all these preserve their implications: because sociological thought as such puts a question mark against the idea we have of ourselves.

Whatever role I play—whether as father, citizen, teacher, journalist, passenger in a bus, or holiday-maker—I conform to certain models of conduct, respect certain customs, obey certain imperatives. These models, customs and imperatives, which I slowly internalised in the course of upbringing and education, have become an integral part of myself. If the children of Catholic families are brought up from birth by Jews, or the children of Jewish families are educated by Catholics, those children become Jews or Christians. Even if they revolt against the faith of their environment, they nevertheless continue to bear the marks of what they received and rejected. Sociology does not limit itself to repeating Pascal's saying that truth on one side of the Pyrenees is falsehood on the other. That formula places the decisive social factor outside ourselves—the sociologist sees it in our innermost selves. The hermit in the desert shares with those from whom he fled the beliefs that impelled him towards a physical but not spiritual solitude. We are not unaware that the chance of our birth-place determines the object of our patriotism; but we prefer to ignore the fact. For that truth, obvious though it is, creates a kind of uneasiness within us. Nobody likes admitting that external factors, whether men or circumstances, are responsible for his innermost nature. This inevitability of our socialisation (or, if another expression is preferred, our accession to humanity) through the intervention of *one* society, one of many, not only creates a sense of uneasiness but also raises philosophical questions.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, the socialisation by which I become what I am and what, from a certain point onwards, I want to be assumes a quite different meaning depending on the sociologist's philosophy. If, like Jean-Paul Sartre in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, one's starting-point is the *pour-soi*, or *praxis* translucent to itself, condemned to the giddiness of total liberty, the result is a plunge into the "practico-inert" and alienation. If, following Freud, we accept an inevitable conflict between the impulses imprinted in our psyche and the necessities of collective life, socialisation means *Verdrängung*, a repression inevitable and essential to society and civilisation. As for "over-repression"—a concept that Herbert Marcuse introduced without being able to supply a working definition of it—it enables one to proceed to the task of criticising a particular social order.

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So long as the psychiatrist or the philosopher has not defined the nature of man, socialisation (*i.e.* the internalisation by each individual of one culture among others) remains a neutral concept, describing an observable process. Durkheim stressed the constraint involved, because he regarded man before socialisation as being animated by indefinite desires, selfish and anarchical, like those of Hobbesian Man. The idea of social constraint playing the part of the categorical imperative goes hand in hand with an implicitly pessimistic theory of pre-social or natural man (in the biological sense).

Secondly, the arbitrary nature of every social phenomenon is a fact, not a criterion of historical judgment. This fact forbids (or should forbid us) all naive, self-confident ethnocentrism, and disturbs the good conscience of all those who possess the truth and know that they possess it. But if we rejected any hierarchy of values between human societies, if all the *rencontres et mélanges* of societies were denied all fertility and the successions of civilisations were denied all meaning, the whole of history would degenerate into a succession of "ethnocides". Sociological theory implies a philosophy of history.

Thirdly, social reality consists, according to the terminology of the Durkheimians, of opinions and ways of thinking; according to that of Max Weber or the existentialists, it consists of the meanings we give to things and our relations with others. What are the relations between the meanings given to events by the actors in them and those that the contemporary or retrospective observer, the historian or sociologist, puts in place of their meanings to the actors?

In his inaugural lecture (1953) Merleau-Ponty said that philosophy

> in principle substitutes a conscious symbolism for the tacit symbolism of life and a manifest meaning for the latent meaning. It is not content to submit to the historical environment [just as Merleau-Ponty himself is not content to submit to his past], but changes it in revealing it and thus making it possible to establish a link with other times, other environments in which its truth appears.

Substitution of a manifest for a latent meaning? I should be inclined to reverse this proposition and to describe the sociologist's work as searching for the latent meaning behind that which immediately presents itself to the conscience of the actors or is revealed by what they say. For the transition from latent to manifest meaning to coincide with the appearance of a truth, the intervention of an overriding philosophy of history is required.

CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS, in a chapter in his *La pensée sauvage* which he devotes to the "critique of dialectical reason", suggests that it is impossible to give an event—the French Revolution—a meaning that transcends or reconciles the conflicting meanings attributed to it by those involved. Thus, objective understanding of the event itself and of the lives of the individuals concerned must be abandoned, and the scientific object must be constructed at another level and by other means. This is a completely legitimate undertaking, provided one does not overlook that the methods used and the specificity of the object constructed must possess a kind of meaning that will be plainly evident.

The sociologist who devotes himself to the empirical analysis of voting behaviour tirelessly tracks down who-votes-for-whom and deduces the manifold variables that determine the voter's choice. But he will never come across rational reflection and honest search for the objectively preferable, which it is inherently impossible to detect by his methods. If he is engaged in analysing the behaviour of millions of social actors, most of whom show the same loyalties or the same hostilities at each election, this task of differentiation is of little importance. But is it the same if he is concerned with the conduct of the peoples' elected representatives, Ministers, or the sociologist himself?

A sociologist is hardly concerned with the prophet's or artist's intentions as such, and—like Weber himself—does not hesitate to put charismatic personalities (Christ, Buddha, Hitler or Huey Long) in the same category. If there had been sociologists at the end of the Roman Empire, they would have carefully analysed the spread of the new faith, the social categories that proportionately provided the largest number of catechumens and martyrs. Would they have taken seriously the content, the specificity, of religious experiences? Would they have understood the cultural revolution of which they were witnesses, the consequences of which are still at work? Has the sociologist who never accepts the idea that social actors have of themselves, of their society, their religion, their world, except as inventory items, the right to have no doubt when he himself is concerned?

In fact, a crisis has only to break out for the quarrels of the schools to be involved in the political battle. Sociologists of the Right and the Left accuse each other of "prejudice", and jointly challenge their common claims to be scientific.

The object of my first series of lectures, "Critique of Sociological Thought", is both to justify and to indicate the limits of these claims. It is an attempt to avoid the alternation between, or combination of, dogmatism and scepticism that is so characteristic of sociology when it applies itself to contemporary societies.

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Socialism & Sociology

THUS WE HAVE ARRIVED AT, or returned to, the theme that I have less right than anyone to evade: that of the relations between knowledge and action, sociology and politics. The birth of socialism and sociology in the same historical circumstances—the fall of the *ancien régime* and rampant industrialism—has given rise to the charge that sociologists are professionally inclined to socialism. In fact, sociologists and socialists together discovered the social field as such. As against economic abstraction and political formalism, they imposed an original way of thinking both on scholars and on politicians. This way of thinking (a famous Vichy Education Minister regarded it as *subversif*) is now shared by all, liberals as well as socialists. Both have learned to distinguish between juridical rules and social reality, between rights recognised by the law and the ability to exercise them effectively.

At the present time this way of thinking is actually charged with the very opposite crime. It is said that, whether they like it or not, whether they are aware of it or not, sociologists serve the established order!

Sociology has been subjected to these contradictory charges since its birth. Let me remind you of the preface to the *Esprit des lois* and the phrases in which Montesquieu alternately masks and reveals himself.

> If I had it in my power to ensure that everyone had new reasons for loving his duties, his prince, his country, and its laws; to enable people better to feel their happiness in each country, under each government, in every position in which they found themselves, I should think myself the happiest of mortals.

Must this declaration of principle be attributed solely to prudence? This should be carefully considered. If the sociologist admits by the assumption underlying his method that social phenomena obey a determinism comparable to that of natural phenomena, does it not indisputably follow that he will demonstrate that things could not have been other than in fact they were? For that matter, Montesquieu, in order to denounce slavery, which he regarded as contrary to the eternal laws of humanity, had no alternative but to resort to rhetoric and eloquence.

A moment later Montesquieu states the other side:

> I should think myself the happiest of mortals if I had it in my power to cure men of their prejudices. I here call prejudices, not those things that cause one not to know certain things, but those that cause one not to know oneself.

If prejudice is defined as unconsciousness of the self, present-day sociology acts in accordance with Montesquieu's wishes. But at the same time it tends in the opposite direction, towards criticism (if not subversion). The hostility to it of authoritarian régimes both of Right and Left is evidence of this—and a tribute to it. Comparing any system with the picture that it likes to present of itself is, in fact, sufficient to create disillusionment with it. Particularly in our period, all of them are discredited by their failure to attain their declared objectives. The gap between the formula of Democracy or the Classless Society and the reality of the struggle for power and of social stratification is wide enough for critical analysis (what each society closes its eyes to) to teach disrespect rather than obedience. The *sociodices* justify the existing condition of men even less than the theodices did.

The philosophies of history of the last century, those of Auguste Comte or Karl Marx alike, resolved the contradiction between a conservatism that based itself on an alleged determinism and the criticisms suggested by the difference between what societies claim to be and what they really were. Each society in its time was what it was bound to be; it could not have been substantially different from what it was; but the movement of history, either of itself or with the aid of revolutionary class or party, would produce an order in conformity with truth and the aspirations of humanity. The process of becoming would finally eliminate the credibility gap between societies and their ideals.

Unless we believe in these pseudo-laws of global becoming, we are in danger, in spite of the progress made in the social sciences, of finding ourselves back in a situation comparable with that of Montesquieu or Max Weber—divided, in other words, between the quest for causal explanations (often valid but always partial) and socio-political criticism.

True, the macro-economics derived from John Maynard Keynes, making use of the statistics of national production, has taught statesmen the art of modifying, if not of finally eliminating, the disastrous fluctuations of the business cycle. All managers, heads of ministries, strategists, have logical and mathematical tools at their disposal that enable them, at any rate formally, to give a rational structure to their decisions. As economic growth in the medium term directly or indirectly benefits a large part of the population, during quiet periods those who broadly accept the existing system easily forget the inevitably political dimension of the administration of public affairs.

The sociologist, even more naturally than the economist, calls us back to order.

LET ME TAKE a fashionable example. Since the sociologists demonstrated that the law giving

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equal educational opportunities does not eliminate but camouflages social inequality, politicians and students have made use of this indisputable fact for their sermons or slogans. Each sociologist, depending on his mood, his political preferences, the trends of the day, presents the same facts in his own style, varying from the coldness of the clinician to the indignation of Montesquieu when faced with slavery. He is in fact aware that in a society founded on an egalitarian ideology the exposure of inequalities and their transmission will seem to the public to be social criticism. It seems to me to be desirable that the sociologist should not restrict himself to this implicit criticism, but should openly state problems, including those to which he is not yet in a position to provide an answer. Can one define an "optimum of mobility" through the generations in the manner in which Sauvy defined the various population optima? To what extent is the transmission of inequalities from generation to generation inevitable? Do different systems differ in this respect, and to what extent? Can governments (and, if so, how) modify the mechanisms by which all societies tend to reproduce themselves (and modern societies have the real originality of appealing to an ideology that condemns these apparently universal mechanisms)?

It is sufficient to ask whether, and to what extent, these mechanisms are "universal" to discover the limits of our knowledge, as well as the fluid frontier between the improbable and the impossible.

HUMAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE constitutes a system on which different conceptualisations give us partial views. The so-called global views are, generally, ideological transfigurations of partial views. We are not unaware that the choice either of centralised Planning or of the mechanisms of the Market influences the whole political, moral and spiritual life of a society. We are not unaware of most of the probable consequences of the choice. But we do not know them all with certainty, and these consequences do not affect different classes in the same way. In its present state, sociology (like all the social sciences, at any rate in the developed societies) appeals to social engineers: those who try to act here and now with a view to achieving partial reforms. It disappoints revolutionaries when it does not infuriate them.

THERE IS in point of fact no revolutionary sociology—though sociologists may be revolutionaries. Sociology draws up a balance-sheet of the revolutions of the past or of the present, a positive or negative balance-sheet that convinces no one. By what yardstick is the suffering of some to be measured against the glorious career of others? How can one scientifically establish that the benefits of a revolution might have been gained at less cost? Sociology makes judgments, not without the risk of error, on the more or less probable, more or less desirable, nature of a revolution—*i.e.*, a sudden and violent change of political or socio-political régime—in this or that country. Revolution may be desirable if certain objectives are attainable by no other means. But that is merely a revolutionary pragmatism which, like all pragmatisms, must submit to an analysis of ends and means. The true revolutionary, as we have known him in Europe since 1789, dreams of a New Man, he wants to "change the world." While sociology explores reality and endeavours to think in terms of the possible, the revolutionary reserves to himself the right of wanting an unprecedented future. This makes his aims irrefutable and undemonstrable.

Perhaps we should be wrong to take the political implications of sociology tragically, either one way or the other. What sociological teaching, indeed, does not seem historically ineffective in comparison with the racist and millenarist aberrations that have ravaged Europe during the last half-century and given the world a different face? True, so-called scientific sociology is slowly influencing our thought and conduct. Scientific civilisation rightly takes pride in the formal rationalisation of all decisions, budgetary, diplomatic and strategic. Nevertheless the phase that Cournot called "historic" has not quite been reached.

The "invisible hand" of the liberals, like Hegel's "reason", pointed towards a rational outcome of the chaos of actions based on passion. Is not our vision of the present day exactly the opposite? Many individual actions present us with a kind of rationalism; but at the general social or historical level there is a rising tide of "unreason", and this includes the uncontrolled race for production and for armaments. Humanity would be wrong to entrust its future to the chance factor that (if we are to take the scientists' word for it) led to its birth.

The Disenchanted World

IN THIS SENSE sociology (like every science, though for different reasons) involves what Max Weber called *die Entzauberung der Welt*. Science deprives the world of its enchantment, strips nature of its charms, of everything that used to make it intimate and familiar, that touched our sensibilities and nourished our dreams. It presents us with a universe subject to a rigorous or chance-governed determinism that the scientists will never cease deciphering and

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that will never again resemble the cosmos of the ancients, the harmony of which once served as a model for and a guarantee of the human order.

This disenchantment of the world was not overlooked by Gaston Bachelard, in spite of his faith in the scientific reason which he regarded as the supreme value.

> No doubt we know very well all that we are going to lose. Suddenly a whole universe has lost its colour, our food has lost its savour, our whole natural psychical *élan* has been broken, turned back, slighted and discouraged. We had such great need to identify ourselves fully with our vision of the world, but it is precisely that need that must be overcome. But stay. It is not in full daylight, but at the edge of the shadow, when it is refracted, that the ray reveals its secrets.

Elsewhere, in an even more lyrical style, he says:

> To be sure, before civilisation the world dreamt a great deal. Myths emerged from the earth, opened the earth, so that it looked at the heavens with the eye of its lakes. A lofty destiny mounted from the depths. Thus myths promptly found human voices, the voice of man dreaming the world with his dreams. Man expressed the earth, the sky, the waters. Man was the voice of the macro-anthropos that is the huge body of the earth. In the earth's cosmic dreams, the world is human body, human look, human breath, human voice.[3]

My colleague Jacques Monod, starting from the field of microbiology, finds the same conflict between the animistic or mythological explanations that alone appease men's anguish and the objective knowledge that is the only source of real truth (that "austere and cold idea that puts forward no explanation but imposes an ascetic renunciation of all other spiritual nourishment"). Like Max Weber, and almost in the same terms, he concludes that "the very definition of 'true' knowledge rests in the last resort on a postulate of an ethical nature". Perhaps he would subscribe to Gaston Bachelard's statement that "the world in which one thinks is not the world in which one lives". In that impersonal "one" it is legitimate to include the scientists themselves. Here lies the crux. How is one to double oneself without losing oneself?

DOES SOCIOLOGY, TOO, FORM part of that century-old enterprise characteristic of our civilisation, the conquest of a sole authentic truth permanently incapable of assuaging our spiritual thirst? Sociology, as I have said, creates a gap between the world in which one lives and that in which one thinks in a way quite different from that in which the natural sciences do so. It pitilessly attaches the adjectives "arbitrary" to our customs and beliefs, even those which are sacred to us. It substitutes indicators for the unique richness and the indescribable depth of our living experience. It is interested only in actions that are repeated, in manifest or latent classes. Everyone becomes one among others, anonymous and uninteresting if he remains alone in his peculiarities, marginal or atypical if he persists in combining characteristics that are normally dissociated. Following Nietzsche, it exposes social actors, and reveals their hypocrisy. Marxism, inasmuch as it is a millenarian vision, belongs to the mythologies by which men have tried to give themselves the certainty of winning in a just war. In unmasking the "false consciousness" of all and the "good conscience" of those in authority, Marxism (like psychoanalysis) belongs more essentially than ever to our time. In one sense all sociologists are like Marxists in their tendency to settle everyone's affairs except their own.

The existential significance of sociology is not to be confused with that of physics or biology in spite of these similarities. Only to a very slight extent are we able to substitute a realm of objective truth and demonstrable explanations for society as it is lived and experienced. The global society of today (and still more that of tomorrow)—the system behind the systems—eludes us. To what extent does a modern society, in its infinite complexity, constitute a "system", except in the banal sense of the reciprocal relations between its constituent elements? Sociologists continually waver between the consciousness and the science of our surroundings.

The anthropologist confirms in his own way Bachelard's statement that one thinks in one world and lives in another. As a scientist he respects all cultures, refuses to establish any hierarchy between them, and wants to save them all from the destruction that threatens them. As a social actor, he has absorbed the values of his culture, spontaneously respects its customs, and shares its ambitions. He lives in the disenchanted world of scientific civilisation, and thinks in a world peopled by all societies living and dead, the perishable structures in which men, numbering a few hundred or some hundreds of millions, have found shelter, faith, meaning, and perhaps peace.

DOES THIS DUALITY OF LIFE and thought inevitably follow from the postulate of objectivity? In fact each one of us in his own way tries to overcome it. Bachelard, when he emerged from the universe of science, sought a warm refuge in poetic surreality. But he remained a spectator of the tumult of history. He psychoanalysed the dreams of humanity, not those of individuals. Léon Brunschvicg wanted the moralist

[3] Gaston Bachelard, *La Formation de l'esprit scientifique* (1938), p. 271; *La Politique de la rêverie* (1961), p. 161.

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to take as his example and model the detached attitude of the scientist who submits to experience and reason, effacing his own ego in order to expose himself to the truth.

Well and good. But what scientist behaves as a scientist when he emerges from his laboratory or intervenes in the arguments in the market-place? And how could he? Neither the results nor the inspiration of scientific inquiry require us to feel compassion for the wretched, respect for the weak, recognition of the dignity of those who will never arise above the shadows. In the biosphere everything happens as if individuals did not count. No other species has the equivalent of the socialist ideal, the control by humanity of its own destiny, genuine equality between men, universal participation in common wealth and common labour.

Max Weber for his part kept to the duality. Scientific truth as a value—one value among others—binds only those who have chosen it for their god. But by that fact it became incapable of distinguishing between the daemon of Socrates and that of Hitler. Commitment is a necessity, not a value.

The rejection of any hierarchy between cultures is, perhaps, a postulate of the anthropologist's or sociologist's method. But how is that lack of distinction to be lived without condemning oneself to indifference and inaction? It certainly remains possible to measure each social type by its own, unique standard, one among others. This is a partially valid way out, in certain fields the only possible one, but hardly compatible in the last analysis with the universal diffusion of the scientific ideal.

I DO NOT HAVE the presumption to claim to be able in a few words to overcome the duality to which so many others are apparently resigned. Fortunately the men whom I have cited implicitly suggest the direction in which a glimmer appears on the horizon. When Bachelard writes that one lives in one world and thinks in another, to which of the two does he belong? Obviously he has placed himself in a third world, that of philosophical reflection, since he is searching for the meaning for the quest of truth and for that of our existence. This third world, in which living experience rises to consciousness of itself, is constructed and not given. It is the citadel into which each one of us retires when struck by misfortune. It is a more or less coherent whole in which the activities between which we are condemned to disperse ourselves and the values suggested by the environment but slowly recognised by the individual as his own, are organised.

Whether he denies it or not, what philosopher has not sought the meaning of his work and of his life in order to withdraw himself from the temptation of nihilism, alternatively a game and a passion, an intolerable frenzy that takes flight in the direction of fanaticism and loses itself in it?

Destiny & Destination

SOCIOLOGY AND MODERN CIVILISATION: the definition of either of those terms would make the subject, not for a single lecture, but of a whole course. Fortunately, in Marcel Mauss's posthumous study of the Nation I found the outline of a huge project of which my own covers a part, though even that exceeds one man's capacity.

Mauss's study was written immediately after the First World War, and was vibrant with the hopes that had been nourished by the ordeals of that War and the final victory and were tragically checked by subsequent events. The scientific project remains.

Mauss took as his point of departure the distinction between society and civilisation. In the latter concept he included "all the social phenomena, customs, manners, words, techniques, beliefs that are capable of travelling and recur in several differently organised societies". In the past he noticed the existence of "areas of civilisation", with ill-defined boundaries, that included societies capable of borrowing technical or mental tools from one another. Since then, he concluded, the area of civilisation had come to coincide at the present day with humanity as a whole. A world or ecumenical civilisation was coming, or was tending to come, into existence.

He simultaneously noted other phenomena that seemed to him equally praiseworthy and were tending to the formation or reinforcement of the nations. A nation, he wrote, was *par excellence* a society integrated by the abolition of all divisions into class, cities, tribes, kingdoms, feudal domains. It believes in its language; wishes to have its own traders, legislators, bankers, teachers, newspapers, art; tries to create a morality, a tradition, a teaching; symbol of a longing for true independence, that total liberty to which so many deprived peoples aspire.

The goal was a human civilisation, nations more conscious of themselves than at any time in the past. A quarter of a century later, immediately after the end of the Second World War, it was sufficient to glance at the chaos that followed two wars in Asia and Europe and see once more the two same divergent but perhaps complementary elements.

Marcel Mauss was still confident when he wrote his unfinished essay on the Nation. The integrated society, he wrote,

> does not desire even to expand, and only the classes that represent earlier forms of the state tend to what

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> is called imperialism. The great democracies or states have always been pacific, and even the Treaty of Versailles expresses their wish to remain within their frontiers.

Today we are better acquainted with the ruses of historical reason. It is not only the classes that represent ancient forms of the state which can inspire and animate the "will to power" (even if they have to dissimulate their ambitions from themselves). Nietzsche, armed only with the intuition of the philosopher or the historian, foresaw that

> the time will come when the struggle for the domination of the world will begin, and it will be conducted in the name of basic philosophical doctrines.[4]

THE MEN OF MY GENERATION were students in the days that followed the First World War, and they wrote their first books in the years that preceded the Second. After 1945 they wondered how to avoid the Third. They had no difficulty in, and deserve no credit for, failing to succumb to the illusions of their elders. Nevertheless, the sociologists did not return to the study of international relations (a neglected field, Mauss wrote half a century ago).

Apart from the immediate experience of our time, two books encouraged me to venture into that neglected field: Hans Delbrück's monumental *Die Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, and Clausewitz's *On War*. The former throws light on the integration of the military machine into the social organisation, on class relationships, means of production and combat, the nature of power. The latter reveals the logic of diplomacy and strategy that is implicit and common to both. The first book leads into the correlations between types of society and types of conflict; the second to the analysis of decisions and participants, to the discovery of the contradiction between objectives and consequences, between rationality in detail and collective unreason. The topics of one course of this year, namely "Imperial Republic" or the United States in the international system, belong to the first type; my theme for next year, "Clausewitz in his own time and today," to the second. Perhaps the same factor explains my choice and the reticence of a number of my colleagues. When it comes to relations between states, science (in the strict sense of the term) has not yet replaced the knowledge of historians or statesmen. It has not yet fashioned, with the aid of its own concepts and methods, something radically distinct from the experiences lived by those who make or undergo both war and peace.

[4] Cited by Martin Heidegger in his *Holzwege* (Frankfurt, 1950), p. 236.
[5] Marcel Mauss, *Oeuvres*, vol. III, pp. 613–14.

The almost universal calling of science—of technique, organisation, and productive units, in spite of the diversity of cultures and régimes—presents another, better tilled and in many respects privileged field. In his preface to *Das Kapital* Marx announced in the tones of an Old Testament prophet that the most advanced economy showed the others the way that all would inevitably have to follow, the sufferings to which the nations would be subjected on the Calvary of industrialisation. They have indeed all been subjected to Stations of The Cross, but not all to the same ones. The plurality of ways and means offers the sociologist a still unexhausted theme. Perhaps I shall succeed in widening and deepening my previous studies in this field.

THE ECUMENICAL CIVILISATION of European origin no longer presents either ideological or political or moral unity. The vague terms that designate the transformations characteristic of our time—"modernisation, industrialisation, development"—bear witness to both the different forms that civilisation assumes and the conflicts through which it spreads. Perhaps the terminological uncertainty betrays uncertainty of thought. In spite of speculations about the future, how are we to grasp the ultimate meaning of the upheavals in which the nations seem alternately protagonists and victims?

Victorious rationalism—man the master and possessor of nature, and at the same time master of his own destiny—has had difficulty in surviving the century of great wars. Nevertheless, permit me to quote a profession of faith that still moves though it fails to convince me:

> The history of human industry is really the history of civilisation, and *vice-versa*. The propagation and discovery of the industrial arts was and remains the fundamental form of progress and makes the development of societies possible; that is to say, a happier life for ever greater numbers in vaster areas. It is that which, through the development of societies, led to the development of reason and of sensibility and will. It is that that has made modern man the most perfect of animals. It is that, too, which is the Promethean theme of the ancient drama. Let us think of that while re-reading the magnificent verses of Aeschylus, for that is what has made men, once only weak ants who haunted sunless caves, children who did not see what they saw, did not hear what they heard, and during their long lives confused their images with the spectres of dreams. . . . Human science and industry are superior and not subject to fatality. They are the third god who does away with the deities and tyrants of heaven and earth. . . . No doubt it is that which will save humanity from the moral and material crisis from which it is suffering.[5]

No doubt about it? Industry serves all purposes, including the rationalisation of the killing of defenceless men by armed warriors.

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It was against these values (or rather against a confidence in the inevitable realisation of these values that seemed to me to be naive) that I revolted when I left university—revolted against the professional sociologists who before 1914 announced the fading away of the military functions of the state and before 1939 had no premonition of the age of contempt. Today . . . who knows?

Sometimes, yes, I too would repeat that science and technology are the new Prometheans who will do away with the tyrants of heaven and earth. And then I re-read the celebrated lines of Max Weber, which echo with the prophecy of Nietzsche:

> No one knows who will live in this building. No one knows whether, at the end of this formidable transformation, entirely new prophets will arise, whether old ideas and ideals of yesterday will assume a new vigour, or whether, on the contrary, a mechanical rigidity embellished by a kind of fossilised self-importance will gain the day. In the latter event it would be true of the "final men" of this evolution of culture that they would be mindless specialists, heartless men of pleasure. These nullities would boast of having climbed to a never previously reached peak of humanity. . . .

Our young students today do think of them as *spécialistes sans esprit*, or *Fachmenschen ohne Geist* (or *Fachidioten*). Science does invent ideologies, but like mythologies never invents more than variations on the same theme.

It is not out of weakness, I think, but out of ignorance that I do not choose between believing in the new Prometheus and waiting in despair for the "final man". With what justification can we hold that men will lose, or save, their souls in the cathedrals of concrete, glass and metal that they are building for themselves and their descendants: or that the Man-Machine couple will liberate, or destroy, human initiative and creativity? There is no turning back on the road to which humanity has committed itself, whether for good or evil. There can be no happy outcome to the double revolution—industrial and democratic—other than the universal dissemination of scientific civilisation; the safeguarding of national individualities and cultural diversities; progressive universal access to material goods, provided in increasing quantities, and to the immaterial goods that each one of us possesses without depriving others of them. As for the possible catastrophes, why spell them out? They are very easy to imagine.

THE LIBERALISM in which I seek and find my spiritual home has nothing in common with *une philosophie pour âmes tendres*, a philosophy for tender souls, to quote a phrase which so pleases Jean-Paul Sartre. In reality the tender souls are those that are afraid of bringing despair to the workers of Billancourt and, like the good bourgeois of the nineteenth century, believe that the people need a religion, even if it is a secular one. If the liberal takes his part in the new Promethean efforts he still tries to act in accordance with the lessons of historical experience, however uncertain they may be, and the partial lessons that he gathers reasonably rather than by reference to some false, total vision.

> In regard to the future, let us have the salutary fear that keeps us alert and combative and not the soft and lazy fear that casts down hearts and enervates them.

The voice of Alexis de Tocqueville is recognisable.

"IN MATTERS OF SCIENCE, one cannot go too slowly; in matters of practice one cannot wait." Sociologists have difficulty in obeying Marcel Mauss's wise precept when they take their own society as their object of study. Their impatience runs the risk of being punished by mistakes.

Fortunately he who chooses a subject of study too close to practice for the slowness of science to be possible can console himself either by recalling mistakes made by greater men or by putting himself in thought in the place of his successors. All sociology (or at least all macrosociology) still preserves elements of social criticism and philosophical interpretation. In this context it matters little whether the genuinely scientific nucleus can or cannot be isolated by epistemology; that part of a sociology of modern civilisation that eludes science, or goes beyond its present state, or governs its trend, belongs to the movement of ideas. Historians and sociologists of tomorrow will look to it for the expression of the awareness that the men of today had of themselves, their society and their future, sometimes of their clairvoyance and often of their blindness. Our work must also be animated by engagement without the partisan preferences which falsify our judgment. . . .

WHEN I WAS A STUDENT I was afraid that my taste for public affairs would divert me from philosophy. For a quarter of a century I have been trying to reconcile what is perhaps irreconcilable. May your confidence in me, my dear colleagues, help me to reduce the gap of an intellectual lifetime: between the destination I set myself on the eve of World War II—1939—and a destiny for which my own philosophy prevents me, in spite of all human circumstances, from not assuming full responsibility.

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Three Poems

Daphne

In the old days
she was glad she won.
Apollo eluded,
the frantic run

finally over,
she stood in a grove
and stayed content,
though she could not move

and could not change—
locked in soil,
forever removed
from the human broil.

The modern Daphne
vacillates;
she begs for roots
and afterwards hates

her rooted place.
She whines and complains
to the river god:
"Transform me again!"

He's sympathetic;
for a reasonable fee
she can sign up for
his therapy.

Yet changed, she runs
in circles, faster,
not really sure
what she is after:

Is she huntress or prey?
Does she love or hate?
"Oh god, oh god,
I'm in such a state.

"Give me elegant leaves
and a smooth bark,
well-formed branches
and a home in a park."

The god smiles:
"Whatever you say.
We're here to help you
in any way."

Stephen Miller

Autumn Leaves

The leaves come breaking in, some black, some gold.
I rush at them, my body like a broom—
And like a bird, and like one crossing over
To the other side.

This is a sudden pleasure for a man,
Being offered such a violent thing to do,
Just down on a windy morning; all in the space
Of a long stride.

Butting against them is only for the sake
Of touching them; and lowering closed eyes
In the hope that lids may feel this swift spray
Of an unseen tide.

But then, without moving, one is back again
(An unfelt, backward flight) where the air is clear,
Tasks the same, pleasure over, dropped leaves making
No "other side."

I lean like a broom-handle by the wall,
Dreams of order pressing their intense
Claims again; while into other doorways
The leaves ride.

Derwent May

Humming Bird

The humming bird refuels
in mid-air from the hub
of a fuchsia flower.
Its belly is feathered white
as rapids; its eye
is smaller than a drop of tar.
A bodied moth, it beats
stopwatches into lethargy
with its wingstrokes.
Food it needs every fifteen
minutes. It has the metabolism
of a steam engine.
Its tiny claws are slight
as pared fingernail;
you could slip it with ease
into a breast pocket.
There it might lie, cowed
—or give you a second heart.

Paul Groves

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Wen I-to

Two Poems

T'ien-an-men[1]

My God today I have been scared stiff.
My two legs are still trembling . . . .
Look, look, they were just about to catch up with me,
Otherwise why should I have run like this?
Sir, let me get my breath back: that thing,
You haven't seen that pitch-black thing,
Headless, lame, so frightening.
Still waving a white flag and talking . . . .
There's nothing one can do about times like this, you ask anyone.
There's nothing really men can do, let alone ghosts.
And they will demonstrate. Can't they mind their own business?
You see, they're all somebody's children.
Aren't they just in their teens, what do they do?
Haven't their heads been smashed by guns?
Sir, I heard that yesterday people got killed again.
I bet you it was those idiot students:
At times like this there are really strange happenings.
These students have plenty to eat, to drink—
Last year our uncle was killed at Yang-liu-ch'ing
That was because he was so hungry he had to enlist.
Who is going to send himself to the God of the Dead for nothing?
I've never lied before in my life, I thought
I'd just filled the lamp with oil, a whole jarful,
Why was it that as I was going, suddenly I couldn't see the road?
No wonder the bald chap was scared out of his wits,
And tells everyone not go go by T'ien-an-men in the dark.
So it's bad luck to us rickshaw pullers,
When by tomorrow morning Peking will be full of ghosts.

Wonder

What I wanted was never the fire-equal red, or the black
At midnight of the Peach Blossom Lake, or the plaintiveness of the ancient lute,
Or the scent of the briar roses: I have never wholeheartedly loved the pride of the spotted leopard,
The tender beauty I wanted was not that possessed by any white dove.
What I wanted was never any of these, but the crystallisation of these,
The Wonder ten thousand times more marvellous!
But this soul was desperate with hunger and I could not
Let it go short of nourishment. Then, even if it was only chaff and bran
One must beg for it like alms. Heaven knows I don't behave like this
Willingly. I was not stubborn, or stupid,
I got tired of waiting, waiting in vain for the Wonder to arrive.

[1] T'ien-an-men (The Gate of Heavenly Peace) has a square in front of it where political demonstrations, sometimes ending in bloodshed, often took place in the early days of the Republican era.

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I dared not let my soul go short of nourishment: who can say
That a treeful of sounding cicadas, a jar of unstrained wine is much?
Even mountain ranges, the light on ravines or the glittering starry emptiness
Are all so commonplace, so unutterably commonplace, not worth
The helpless happy surprise that shouts the most moving names,
The longing to carve them in gold and put them into a song.
I also say that to let tears come at the song of the oriole
Is rather too absurd, too unconvincing, simply not worthwhile.
But perhaps I couldn't help being like that: this heart
Was really desperate with hunger, I had to be economical and pretend that wild roots
Were fine cooking.
  There is no harm in saying it out loud if only—
If only the Wonder will show its face, I shall abandon the commonplace instantly,
I shall never again look at a leaf outlined by frost and dream of the glory of spring flowers.
Never waste again this soul's strength, but I shall peel open the uncut stone
And look for the warmth of the white jade inside. Show me the Wonder
And I shall never again whip "ugliness", forcing it to give up
The meaning of what is behind; really I have long grown tired
Of these things, these misunderstandings that are really too hard to explain.
All I want is one clear word, flashing like a holy sign
With sacred light, I want it whole, the beauty of its full face.
I am not stubborn, I am not stupid, I cannot see the
Round fan without envisaging the immortal face behind the fan.
Then
  I shall wait, no matter for how many incarnations—
Since I have made a vow at the beginning, I don't know how many
Incarnations ago—I have been waiting, I don't complain, only wait quietly
For the Wonder to arrive. There must be such a day,
Let lightning strike at me, volcanoes consume me, all hell rise up
And assault me . . . . Fear? Don't worry, in any case the whirlwind
Will not blow out the lamp of my soul. I wish this body would turn to ashes,
It won't matter, because that, that will be my momentary,
My one momentary instant of infinity—a puff of fragrance, the most mysterious
Silence (sun, moon, all movements of stars long since
Halted, time too stopped), the most rounded peace . . . .
I hear the squeak of the hinge on the door
Bringing with it the rustle of a skirt—that would be the Wonder—
In the half-open golden door, wearing a circle of light.
  You.

translated from the Chinese
by Tao Tao Sanders

WEN I-TO (b. 1899), though educated in the traditional Chinese fashion, was one of the earliest poets to use vernacular Chinese as the medium for their own poems. He himself imported a system of metric feet borrowed from English poetry. Wen joined the People's Democratic League, a minority party positioned between the Communists and the Nationalists and campaigning for liberal reforms. In 1946, after a speech in which he denounced the Nationalist government, he was killed by gunmen. *Red Candles: Selected Poems* by Wen I-to, translated by Tao Tao Sanders, a young Oxford scholar, will be published by Cape in the Autumn.

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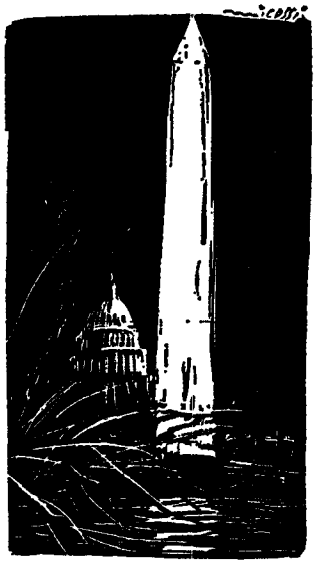
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

Years of Intellectual Havoc

By Henry Fairlie



ON 15 February 1968, G. R. Elton gave his inaugural lecture as Professor of English Constitutional History in the University of Cambridge; he called it "The Future of the Past."[1] Twenty-two months later, on 29 December 1969, C. Vann Woodward gave his presidential address to the American Historical Association which was meeting in Washington; he called it "The Future of the Past."[2] If one were to edit a volume of documents to illustrate the differences between the two countries, there is no doubt that the pronouncements of these two historians would be showpieces.

They both noticed that the interest in history was supposed to be declining. "Within the academy," said the American, "the conventional barometer of departmental fortunes (for what it is worth) is student patronage, and in significant quarters that barometer has been falling lately for history." The voice of the Englishman was a little different: "In 1928 one in four undergraduates read history. Nowadays the figure is one in twelve. I think one in twelve is still too many, but one in four is quite appalling. The responsibility is too much."

Said the American: "The declining status of history in the intellectual community at large is a more serious matter. Most disturbing of all is the animus that emanates from quarters generally assumed to be in friendly alliance with history: the arts and humanities." Said the Englishman: "We have already our conquests . . . we have conquered so much that we have introduced a historical dimension into almost every subject you can think of. . . . The academic world has never been so historical, I think, in all the past."

They were both speaking to the demand that history should be "usable" and "relevant", and we may let the American again speak first:

> In their quest for a "usable past" [the Americans] have fallen into what J. R. Pole calls "the American extension of the Whig interpretation of history." An instrumentalist view of historiography, this interpretation regards history as an instrument of political or social action. . . . A fatal betrayal of the craft would be to permit the profession of history to become inextricably entangled with the future of the past, the purposeful past of the rationalizers, the justifiers, and the propagandists.

On the same theme, the accent of the Englishman was unmistakable:

> It is our task to tell the social scientists to shut up. To keep their remedies to their books and not to try on the *corpus vile* of unfortunate mankind the solutions which they propound. . . . Each time [their] remedies apply to the past situation—never to the present. They are always out of date. . . . They are learning from the past to do something for the present and future. The historian should tell them that this cannot be done, that this is not the way to do it.

THE SEARCH FOR A "USABLE PAST", said Professor Woodward, "has both radical and conservative advocates, but none more explicit than the conservative Conyers Read, who in his presidential address of 1949 enlisted the historian in the cold war." On the other hand, according to Professor Elton, "conservatives don't think about the past at all. . . . That is the preserve of the left, that is the preserve of the revolutionaries"—because they believe that they are a part of a historical process, they are dominated by the past, and must appeal to it.

The address of Vann Woodward takes us back to the time when some historians of the New Left sought to disrupt the meetings of the American Historical Association with the demand —put most angrily by Staughton Lynd, a Quaker and a pacifist—that its members, instead of writing history, should be making it: a demand to which it seemed fruitless, at the time, to return the suggestion that the only makers of history are the writers of it. But the summons to the historian to be a participant and even a protagonist—the words used by Lynd—in current events was less important than the call to him,

[1] Cambridge University Press, 1968.
[2] *American Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 3, February 1970.

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as a historian, to re-write history for the convenience of an immediate cause: to discover a purposeful past which would be useful to him as a propagandist in the present day.

HISTORICAL REVISION must be distinguished from historical revisionism; and the "ism" helps to point the difference. The motive of historical revision is to be found within the activity of being a historian, as he responds to new sources and adopts new procedures, but also as he answers to his own concept of what history can be, of what it is that the historian can know. The motive of historical revisionism, on the other hand, is supplied from outside the activity of being a historian; its objective is not purely, or even primarily, that of trying to discover what happened in the past.

Polydore Vergil, we may say, was engaged in historical revision when he destroyed the tale that Britain had been founded by Brutus the Trojan; but he was engaged in historical revisionism when, between the completion of his *Anglicae Historiae* in 1513 and its publication twenty-one years later, he conveniently discovered that Henry VIII was "possessed of an imperial diadem as of a gift which the emperor Constantine bestowed." A man of the new learning, his attitude to history nevertheless altered when he exchanged the post of secretary to the Pope for that of Archdeacon of Wells; and there are Polydore Vergils, men of learning who are as pliable, in our own time.

It is almost too easy to recall Staughton Lynd as an example of the historical revisionism to which the New Left set itself. He made it so clear that he was not interested in history that there is almost nothing to prove against him:

> Willy-nilly I was functioning as therapist in addition to historian; in reporting the past I turned it, whether I wished it or not, into a medium for the discovery of personal identity.
>
> . . . for someone like myself who was more and more committed to the thesis that the professor of history should also be a historical protagonist, a complex confrontation with Marxist economic determinism was inevitable.
>
> The historian's first duty . . . is the sensitive chronicling in depth of the important events of his own lifetime.[3]

He said that "the point of departure" of the historian is "man's existential freedom to choose", and that he should be governed by "the sense of reality of the historical actor in the present moment."

How did such a man decide that he could be a historian? With an innocence which some may find attractive, but which I find appalling, he has told us. Born in 1929, "I decided to become a historian when I was twenty-nine. I had 'taken' no more than three semesters of history as an undergraduate. But during a checkered, prolonged adolescence . . . I carried about with me two books on history: *The Historian's Craft* by Marc Bloch and *The Idea of History* by R. G. Collingwood." Interesting as these two books are, it would have been more to the point if he had been "carrying about" (an odd phrase) some of the actual historical writings of these two men. The reflections of a historian on his craft may be important—thought about thought, as Collingwood put it—but the actual history which he writes will show most clearly what history can be.

"I liked these books", which is acceptable, although it would be interesting to be told how he coped with the fact that their ideas of history are opposed. Anyhow, "Bloch's appealed to me because he wrote it as a member of the French resistance, without the aid of books and papers." But in fact Bloch specifically tells us that he had his notes with him, apologising to the reader for "the impossibility of reaching any large library" and "the loss of my books", which have made him "dependent upon my notes and my memory." One suspects that Lynd did not just slip, that he needed the assurance that a historian could write well on the barricades "without the aid of books and papers." Even the work of Bloch had to be made into a "usable past" to serve his own autobiography.

After absorbing Bloch and Collingwood in shots, so to speak, where did he go? One could have guessed. "When I 'went into' history I began with Charles Beard's interpretation of the United States Constitution." He had two reasons: "that Beard's was the most important attempt to date at an economic interpretation of American history, and that I was enough of a Marxist to find this a logical point of departure"; and because, "as one considerably alienated from America's present, I wanted to know if there were men in the American past in whom I could believe." Whatever he may have meant by believing in someone in the past—try it out: "I believe in William the Conqueror"—it is a distorting concern for the historian.

WHAT IS INTERESTING in this odyssey is that Staughton Lynd was primarily interested, not in history, but in historians—"History, not historians, is my concern", he might have noticed

[3] First published as "A Profession of History" (*New Journal*, 12 November 1967); reprinted with alterations as "The Historian as Participant" in R. A. Skotheim, ed., *The Historian and the Climate of Opinion* (Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass., 1969).

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Bloch saying at the beginning of *Feudal Society*—and one is obliged to point out that this sometimes seems to be a part of the condition of the American historian in general, as well as of the New Left historian in particular. Even as true a historian as Richard Hofstadter laboured to produce an extensive work on *The Progressive Historians,* and what is worth observing is that this was not really a deviation from the rest of his activity. *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (1944), *The Age of Reform* (1955), *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963): they all have themes, and the history is an illustration of the themes. Even in the best known of his works, *The American Political Tradition: and The Men Who Made It* (1948), the actual men are illustrations, not only of the general theme in the title, but of the specific themes in the headings: "Andrew Jackson and the Rise of Liberal Capitalism" or "John C. Calhoun: the Marx of the Master Class" or "Herbert Hoover and the Crisis of American Individualism". One begins to suspect the neatness of the categories.

PART OF THE EXPLANATION lies in the academic specialisation by which graduate studies, especially, are beset in America, so that history breeds social history, and then cultural history, and then intellectual history, until the progeny drown the parent. Parricide is a crime which the scholar in the United States is almost forced to commit. It is not only that the economic historian sometimes seems unable to speak to the intellectual historian, but that both of them too often seem to have lost sight of history. Thus, the cultural historian begins to feel that he has a closer affinity to the anthropologist than to the historian in other fields; and he soon ceases to write history, and writes instead a feebly historicised anthropology. He has committed parricide, in short, to announce himself a bastard; and this is one of the reasons why Professor Woodward was anxious about the contempt for history shown by the social sciences, whereas Professor Elton could genially proclaim that history had conquered them.

"American intellectuals have a lamentably thin sense of history", said Hofstadter,[4] and one is inclined to include American historians among them. The history which they write—if it is at all ambitious, and not merely at the level (as so much of it is) of the monograph—tends to be un-historical. In becoming the history of ideas or of themes—American historians are for ever exploring the Themes of American history—there is a persistent danger that these ideas and these themes are seen as fixed, static, given; in short, un-historical. If they have existed at one time, they must have existed, so to speak, *ab urbe condita*; and the attitude of American historians to the history of their country is interestingly like that of Livy to the history of Rome, as it is described by Collingwood in *The Idea of History*:

> Rome is the agent whose actions he is describing. Therefore Rome is a substance, changeless and eternal. From the beginning of the narrative Rome is ready-made and complete. To the end of the narrative she has undergone no spiritual change . . . the origin of Rome, as he describes it, was a kind of miraculous leap into existence, the complete city as it existed at a later date.

I am not suggesting that individual American historians do not resist this attitude; but the collective sense that the Beginning in 1776 contained the Plan of the Future is very strong, in them as in their countrymen.

This makes it difficult, not only for the historians to write about the past, but for the people to act in the present. Any good which is sought, any evil which happens, must be shown to be a part of the substance, changeless and eternal, of the country. Thus, the explanation of outbreaks of political violence in the past decade has not been sought in the present, but in American History, in the American Character; and it was again characteristic that one of the last contributions of Richard Hofstadter was to write an introduction—brilliant as usual, but to me perverse—to a collection of documents which was intended to illustrate that the recurrence of violence was one of the Themes of the history of the country. But, if this attitude makes it difficult to manage the problems of the present, it also makes history itself—the profession, the craft—peculiarly vulnerable to schools of revisionist historians, usually responding to a present urgency, who argue that some theme in the country's past—Racism or Expansionism, Imperialism or Radicalism—has hitherto been ignored; and the search for Origins is resumed.

NO ONE KNOCKED Staughton Lynd more smartly about the head than the young Marxist historian—young? well, of a new generation—Eugene D. Genovese. In his most extended attack on Lynd,[5] whom he classed as a "hippie neo-Marxist", Genovese was abrupt. He dismissed Lynd's examination of, and appeal to, the Declaration of Independence, as "not

[4] *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (Vintage, New York, 1963), p. 6.

[5] First published in *New York Review of Books,* 26 September 1968; reprinted in *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History.* By EUGENE D. GENOVESE. Pantheon, New York, $10-00; Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London, £5.

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history at all . . . but a political testament with historical references added to establish a pedigree", and he asked scornfully "how could one write a history of 'self-evident truths'?" (In the same manner, he later said: "We are spared an explanation of why an existential anything needs any history at all", which one can mark down as a bull's-eye.

"Writing as a historian", he continued, Lynd "nevertheless denies the importance of the social context in which ideas occurred—the 'great truths' are to be self-evident and absolute—and he therefore denies the usefulness of history except for the purposes of moral exhortation." It was from this ground, more than from any other, that he asserted that Lynd's view "leads him to do violence to almost every historical question he touches." He was attacking, in fact, not merely Lynd's "shallow scholarship", but the unhistorical tendency in American history which I have been describing.

One hears the historian in all this, and one hears also the Marxist. One of the interests in Genovese's work is that, while the Marxist in him tries to assist the historian, the historian is finding it increasingly difficult to accommodate the Marxist. In pursuing his primary interest, the history of slavery, he insists that Marxian concepts can provide a useful tool; but anyone who has followed his work must wonder whether he has not reached the stage at which he can take hold of the tool only by the blade, so that it cuts into him more than into the facts which he tries to understand. This is a quandary in which many Marxist scholars have found themselves, and Genovese has tried all the ways of escape. Marx has been misinterpreted; Marx was sometimes wrong; Marx was not always a good Marxist; other Marxists have misread Marx. But, even though he seems almost to have exhausted the usefulness of this tool, what matters is that he has throughout been interested in historical revision and not in historical revisionism. He has sought to use Marxism to assist him as a historian, and not to use history to justify him as a Marxist.

He is not only a good historian; he must be regarded as an important figure. American scholarship has not been used to announced Marxists who are also good at their job, and the American Left, especially the intellectual Left, has not been used to spokesmen who can speak with as powerfully self-critical a voice as this:

> Nowhere have the people ever benefited from the efforts of those who have beneficently lied to them. . . . Historians who do not respect historical truth, who sneer at objectivity and fear disorienting the masses by laying bare the complexity, contradiction and tragedy that define all human experience, can end only by serving the ruling class they think they are opposing or, at best, some new and exploitative élite waiting to ride the waves of revolutionary change.
>
> Those who wish to spend their lives in the fantasies of a revolutionary apocalypse—of a grand denouement that features the overthrow of the American state by an invincible army of acid-heads and suburbanites—have no need for intellectual work beyond that which informs strategy and tactics. Those, on the other hand, who have lost patience with this cult of perpetual adolescence, who are interested in building a movement to change society and not merely in rebelling against society for the comfort of one's own soul, and who can face the necessity of waging a long, hard struggle to reshape our national culture as well as our national politics, cannot afford to make a single concession to nihilist doctrines.
>
> The dishonesty of the children-are-being-napalmed argument [therefore the historian should not waste his time studying medieval France] becomes apparent as soon as we reflect on the continuity of oppression and barbarism throughout history. . . . The argument reduces immediately to the proposition that history is not worth pursuing as a vocation unless it is directly related to the struggle against the latest atrocities.
>
> . . . those great and living traditions of free and critical thought which are the glory of Western civilization and without which we have nothing to offer the American people or our comrades in the socialist countries who are to-day fighting with genuine heroism to humanize their societies. . . .

One could quote more—his insistence that "ideologically motivated history is bad history"; his defence of the universities and the professional associations as "places of contention"; his critical examination of some of the programmes of black studies as "factionally based proposals to relate them to one or another political tendency within the black community and to exclude others"—but the honesty of the voice is clear. In the madness of the time, among other socialists and other radicals, he maintained it only with difficulty; yet no one who has read his work can doubt that he is what he says he is, "a socialist who writes history", anxious to find "a general critique of the capitalist social order", but certain that he cannot help to do this by being a bad historian.

THE REVISIONIST HISTORIANS of the New Left set out in various directions, and in each they came rapidly to a dead-end.

1. They tried to uncover in the United States an indigenous radical tradition, to "Americanize the radical programme", as Harold W. Cruse put it, "by bringing historically native radicalism up to date", and to use this radical past to establish their own legitimacy in the present. This effort petered out because they could find few radicals and even fewer radical movements in their country's past. Not many of them were

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able to join Staughton Lynd in finding that, in "the Revolutionary language of inalienable rights, a natural higher law, and the right to revolution" of the Declaration of Independence, the "characteristic concepts of the existential radicalism of to-day have a long and honourable tradition". William Appleman Williams could find no genuinely radical inspiration before W. E. B. Du Bois, Eugene Debs, and the Wobblies; but even then the New Left historians fell into a protracted dispute about the reasons for the failure of the Socialist Party, because they could not admit either its own inadequacies or the success of American society in meeting the popular discontents of the time.

In reviewing two of their books, a critical historian said: "About American radicalism, one can only conclude that the past has been unsuccessful, the present is parlous, and the future seems dubious.[6]

2. "American radicals have long been imprisoned", says Eugene Genovese, "by the pernicious notion that the masses are necessarily good and revolutionary, and by the even more pernicious notion that, if they are not, they should be." To this end, some of them sought to revive what one historian called "this hoary thesis" of the democratic masses in the Revolution. Aileen Kraditor, an able historian and a serious socialist, said of the thesis, as put forward by Jesse Lemisch: "He discusses Adams's undemocratic constitution for Massachusetts, but fails to mention that the voters wanted less religious toleration than Adams did. . . . Lemisch fails to show how typical were the undeferential plebeians whom he cites. . . . The existence of plebeian loyalists is admitted only in a footnote, and their views on inequality are not mentioned".[7]

"History written from the bottom up", said Genovese in discussing the history of slavery, "is neither more nor less than history written from the top down. It is not and cannot be good history".

3. The present foreign policy of the United States had to be explained in terms of "imperialist" or, more generally, "expansionist" tendencies in the American past. In the hands of William A. Williams, the expansionist tendency was offered as another great Theme of American history, nothing more nor less than a revised thesis of the frontier:

> America's great evasion lies in its manipulation of Nature to avoid a confrontation with the human condition and with the challenge of building a true community. . . . Nature offered, and Americans seized, a way of becoming a world unto themselves . . . the frontier is a cast of mind as well as a stretch of open territory . . . unless it is shortly modified and ultimately reversed, the subtle processes which shifted the image of the frontier from the continent to an overseas empire will transfer it once again, this time to space itself, and the evasion will become literally projected to infinity.[8]

It is hard to remember that these slack phrases are offered as history.

Reviewing an earlier statement of this new frontier thesis, John Higham said: ". . . it treats expansion wholly as a mode of escape, distinguishing very little between periods, kinds, and degrees".[9]

4. In developing the "expansionist" thesis into an "imperialist" thesis, it had to be shown that economic interest had become a governing factor. The most obvious way of proving this thesis was to concentrate on the imperialism of the end of the 19th century, and John W. Rollins contrived to argue that even the anti-imperialists of that time (and since) were in fact imperialists! But the brunt of their attack fell on the New Deal which (according to Lloyd Gardner) "forsook viable domestic remedies and readied itself for the pursuit of . . . world frontiers . . . as its solution to the crises of the 1930s." A line was drawn from the Open Door to the New Deal in terms of expansionist trade policies.

Thomas J. McCormick replied: "American expansionism in this century has not been '*laissez faire* liberal expansion'. Nor is 'belief in the curative powers of expansion' . . . the legacy of the anti-imperialists."[10]

5. Once it had been shown that the New Deal, in pursuit of economic expansion, was readying itself for world frontiers, the first step—chronologically—had been taken to argue that the Cold War was its invention. First, the entrance into the Second World War:

> American leaders had to face German and Japanese opposition to their goals. . . . There is no attempt here to state that the New Deal wanted or promoted American entrance into the Second World War. . . . But the New Deal would not back down in the face of threats to liberal trade and the Open Door. Thus the clash became inevitable.

Having entered the war against Germany and Japan because "world leadership offered the same solution to American leaders that Micawber found", these leaders converted it between 1943 and 1945 into a struggle against Russia. The ground was thus prepared for

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[6] Melvyn Dubofsky, *American Historical Review*, vol. 75, no. 2, December 1969.

[7] *American Historical Review*, vol. 74, no. 2, December 1968.

[8] *The Great Evasion: An Essay in the Contemporary Relevance of Karl Marx and on the Wisdom of Admitting the Heretic into the Dialogue about America's Future* (Quadrangle, Chicago, 1964).

[9] *Studies on the Left*, II, 6, 1961.

[10] *Studies on the Left*, III, 1, 1962.

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Gabriel Kolko's argument[11] that, during this period, Russia was moderating and anti-revolutionary, not forcing Communist régimes on Eastern Europe, but letting events take their course; and it was in pursuit of this interpretation that he "rationalized" the Russian conduct in the Katyn massacre in language which one historian found "strained" and "embarrassing".

The remaining steps in the argument, leading to the insupportable—therefore useless—conclusion that the American intervention in Viet Nam has been a war for the survival of American capitalism, need no repetition here.

THIS IS THE BALDEST SUMMARY of some of the directions in which the New Left historians have tried to move, and one must comment first on their method. Marcus Cunliffe once referred to their "footnoted anger," and it is an illuminating phrase. It is not only that their numerous footnotes often appear to be the only evidence of their scholarship, but that these footnotes tediously refer one, as evidence for their interpretations, only to each other's works. Their documentary evidence—and they rely almost entirely on snippets of quotations from documents—again and again turns out to be no more than the quotations which other historians of their own mind and persuasion have already quoted. This is the way in which canards become folklore; and they pick over the Pearl Harbour documents, for example, in the same way (and to the same end) as does the John Birch Society.

The method has results which are as ludicrous as they are misleading. What is one to make of the fact that, again and again, a debate between Charles Beard and Henry Wallace in the 1930s is offered as evidence that the New Deal sought world leadership and world frontiers in pursuit of economic expansion to solve the domestic problems of the country? The debate had its interest. It may even be historically useful as an illustration of the kind of argument which was taking place. But it is evidence of nothing except the debate. But add to the quotations from Henry Wallace some quotations from Cordell Hull, and the case is complete. The clash with Germany and Japan, says Lloyd Gardner, "had been inevitable since the New Deal had decided to follow Henry Wallace and Cordell Hull into the frontiers of the world." Anyone who thinks that Franklin Roosevelt *followed* either of these men *anywhere* needs his head examined.

[11] *The Politics of War: The World and the United States Foreign Policy, 1943–1945* (Random House, New York, 1968).

[12] Charles H. Wesley, *Neglected History: Essays by a College President* (Central State College Press, Wilberforce, Ohio, 1965).

It was in the same way—by quotations—that some of these historians of the New Left, in their attack on the New Deal, worked themselves into the position of erecting (lo and behold!) Herbert Hoover and William E. Borah as their twin heroes, who both seem to have spoken with the tongues of angels in their prophecies. It is not their rehabilitation to which one objects, but the nature of it, the unhistorical purposefulness with which it was attempted.

There *was* a genuine task of historical revision to be done at the beginning of the 1960s. On the one hand, the "consensus" history of the two previous decades had exhausted its insights; on the other, the political bankruptcy of American liberalism, although it was briefly obscured by the personal leadership of John Kennedy, was already clear. It was desirable that historians should free themselves from the first, and begin a critical examination of the nature of the second, of the historical contribution which American liberalism had made, and its meaning. In a sense, the task was single. The historical "consensus" and the liberal "consensus" had been the same coin. The "neo-conservatives" had tried and failed. The field was wide open and needed careful digging.

BY THEIR UNHISTORICAL APPROACH, the historians of the New Left not only threw their opportunity away but made it more difficult for serious historians to do the work. Ten years were not only lost but were used to spread havoc in the field, so that there is now ground to be regained before any advance can be made. By searching for a past which would be "usable" (even a Borah who would be usable), they made history more useless than true history can be.

I have not mentioned their excursions into Negro history. These have been confused and embarrassed, because they have been more concerned with what the Black today wishes to hear than with what actually happened in the past. This second interest has been the concern of Genovese, and it is not surprising that his historical approach has offered a picture of U.S. Negro slavery which makes far more sense—which seems much more relevant—in the present day than that discovered by the "misplaced piety and loose rhetoric" which (as one historian has said) has flawed so much recent inquiry into the Negro past, and which elevates Crispus Attucks into one of the "first martyrs to freedom."[12]

HERE IS GENOVESE making his point with a familiar robustness:

> It has become virtually sacrilege, if not blatant white racism, to suggest that slavery was a social system within which whites and blacks lived in harmony as well as antagonism, that there is little evidence of massive, organised opposition to the

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> régime, that the blacks did not establish a revolutionary tradition of much significance, and that our main problem is to discover the reasons for widespread accommodation and, perhaps more important, the long-term effects both of the accommodation and of that resistance which did occur.

He is equally impatient with the apologists for slavery who saw the Negro only as a child-like figure, and with the "neo-abolitionists" who say that the experience of slavery did nothing but brutalise and crush him. Both pictures, the second as well as the first, he says, deprive the Negro of his autonomy as a human being, and suggest that his response to slavery was no more than dependence and passivity. When he reached the point, some years ago, of admitting, on the evidence before him, that "black Americans embrace genuine ingredients of a separate nationality, even as they form part of a general American nationality," he had independently come to the same assertion of their dual nationality, Afro *and* American, which the Blacks themselves have made.

After the fury of their activity during the 1960s, the New Left in general, and the historians of the New Left in particular, have left almost no fruitful idea, either to accept or to reject. The most important reason may be found in the betrayal by its intellectuals of their calling and of their method. Other socialist historians besides Eugene Genovese became impatient at their refusal to obey the straightforward injunction of Robert Nisbet: "Whatever the demands of social theory, the first demands to be served are those of the social reality we find alone in the historical record." Many non-socialist historians resisted the violence which they did to historical truth. But an influential body of supposedly educated opinion—serious newspapers and serious journalists—sided with the Staughton Lynds, never reflecting themselves on the truth or otherwise of what they were being told, never themselves examining their own knowledge of the history of their country, never themselves even noticing a lie when it was uttered; and leaving it to a Marxist to proclaim what their bankrupt liberalism could no longer affirm, that any successful progressive movement in America

> must have a philosophy and a program that can reconcile individual liberty with democratic rule, humane learning with mass education, political freedom with social order; a movement that can rest its reconciliation on a defence of the admirable and the solid in the experience of our nation and of Western civilization—not the least of which is precisely the achievement of a rationalist and critical tradition.

They left it to a Marxist to say that? Believe it or not, they did; and one cannot yet be sure that, after ten years of intellectual havoc in which they have acquiesced, they have even now learned their lesson.

Resolution

Shaving by an open window,
Being forced to stand
By one's own armed hand
And contemplate:

Soap like ice-cream, water;
The garden of morning
Cool; mirrored me yawning;
And deeper things

Which intrude like fish—
Memory of last night:
That resolution of Blake
To keep up the mental fight.

William Oxley

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Susan Fromberg Schaeffer

The Door

When my head touches the pillow, the voices start.
They are outside the door, so I can't tell how many there are.
They keep saying how much they will do; they will help me get out.
One says she will dissolve herself
And come under the door like a gas,
Another will melt herself down like a wax,
Take a cast of the key to slide under the door,
Or throw herself like a stone through a sharp pane of glass,
Though this may mean slashing her wrists.

I wake up and tell them in whisper or hiss
I like the room just as it is, with its four walls
Like four book jackets, holding their stories in.
Before, the mirrors were up, leaning in, smudged
By the fingers and thumbs, noses and lips,
Holes in strong wood, thick as prints on a drinking glass
Too many people had kissed, and when the wind came up,
The curtain would grope through the room
Like a dangerous hand.
Now the mirrors are gone, and the window is shut.

The voices are at it again, having their say.
I tell them, I was told to stay here, and I will.
I remind them how all the rivers drip into the seas
And flow through the mouths of the sharks,
How the topmost boughs always crack under my weight,
How someone has always sawed through one of the rungs,
And how the beaks of the buzzards wait in the peaks
Of the day for the sped vessels lighter than air.

Then they shut up. But soon they come back with their props,
The circus balloon, the white rabbit pulled like a cloud
From the sky's flat blue hat, the shroud to go over
The magician's girl who then will grow whole
(she won't get up, but sleeps like a dress in a trunk)
And Christ dancing in the suit of the lumbering bear.
Now they are singing of the world and its pearls;
They are offering me one, like a sweet or a drug.
I am in the cradle, and I am going to stay.

They are gnashing their teeth;
They are telling me terrible tales
Of the cardboard beasts circling my bed, and the sun,
Hung in the sky like a toy, more than just warm.
They are warning me of the walls, and how they move in.
They are crowded and cramped; their paper dresses are torn.
They lust for the halls of the carpeted skull.
They are starved to be born.

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SCIENCE

Reflections in a Hospital

Then & Now — By HENRY MILLER

DESPITE THE PROFESSIONAL DISTINCTION of its medical staff and the fact that in 1874 it pioneered clinical education for women medical students, the squalidly housed Royal Free—at present in Gray's Inn Road but shortly to be recreated in the more salubrious environment of Hampstead—is not the most famous of London's teaching hospitals, nor is it the oldest. However, the circumstances of its establishment by William Marsden in 1828 are of special interest and have given it an ambience which it still partly retains.

Marsden was born in 1796 in that cradle of the industrial revolution, Sheffield, and was encouraged in his early interest in science and in the pursuit of a professional career by a sympathetic grandfather who was a gentleman farmer. He began life as a druggist's apprentice in his home town, but soon defied family pressures to travel as a youth by stage-coach to London in order to train as a surgeon.

He was apprenticed to a general practitioner surgeon in Holborn, supplemented this rather sketchy education by attending a private anatomy school whose scientific facilities derived from the Resurrectionists rather than the University Grants Committee, and walked the wards of St Bartholomew's Hospital. The year he qualified as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons—1827—he was returning home from his Christmas shopping when he found a dying girl on the steps of St Andrew's Church in Holborn. He put her in a cab and drove her to St Bartholomew's Hospital. She could not be admitted because the appropriate formal arrangement had not been made with one of the governors. The same happened at St Thomas's and Guy's, and Marsden had to bribe an aged widow to shelter the girl during her last days. Less than two months later he assembled the committee of businessmen that established the Royal Free Hospital, a hospital on an extremely modest scale and at first little more than a dispensary with an occasional in-patient. However it was genuinely free to all comers, and devoted in the main to patients in the slums surrounding its first site in Hatton Gardens. Venereal disease was the commonest condition treated in these early years; and while the great entrenched institutions were tortured by moral controversy over the propriety of treating the consequences of Sin, Marsden flew in the face of orthodox opinion and extended the services of his hospital to outcasts of every kind. Bruised chimney-sweeps, rheumatic mud-larks, tuberculous crossing-sweepers, and rat-bitten toshers who combed the sewers for marketable débris were conspicuous amongst those attending the hospital. There is no need to dwell on the subsequent history of the Royal Free Hospital, except to mention that it was the only hospital to admit patients with cholera in the epidemic of 1832; in 1853 it became a medical school; in 1858 it elected Florence Nightingale an honorary governor; and it was the first London hospital to admit women students.

MARSDEN'S LIFE covered a period of more than seventy years of progress in British medicine and he died in 1867. It is interesting to cast an eye over medicine as it was when he arrived in London from Sheffield in the year of the battle of Waterloo.

The population was riddled with tuberculosis, venereal disease and alcoholism, and infested with vermin of every kind. Public executions were a regular event in Newgate Street, lunatics were treated by flogging, and medical practice was dominated by blood-letting. Such surgery as was performed was carried out on patients

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strapped to the table, without anaesthetic, in hospitals that were little different from filthy prisons. Every patient admitted had to pay a charge for clothing and bedding, which effectively excluded the destitute. Dying patients were not admitted because of the danger that the hospital would be saddled with burial costs. Patients suffering from infectious and venereal diseases were excluded, as were children and pregnant women and the mentally ill; in fact the hospitals were virtually reserved for short-term illnesses, likely to be cured without or more often in spite of treatment. The tradition of nursing by religious orders had died, and most of the nurses were untrained, some drunken and debauched. It was not until a quarter of a century later that Elizabeth Fry began to organise the training of nurses.

This, then, was the social milieu in which Marsden's hospital was established. What was the intellectual climate of British medicine in 1828?

On the continent of Europe the medical history of the first half of the nineteenth century was in essence a continuation of that of the eighteenth. Modern medicine began in 1858 with the publication of Virchow's *Cellular Pathology*, and for the rest of the century German influence was dominant. But, before Virchow, German medicine was anything but impressive. It was an era of snap diagnosis, therapeutic nihilism, and metaphysical claptrap. In France the tendency to rationalise all disease in terms of a universal pathology was paramount. This habit, of course, dies hard. Even in our own time psycho-analysis, focal sepsis, auto-intoxication and (today) immunology have claimed this role. In early 19th-century France, Broussais thought that all disease was due to gastroenteritis, and Cruveilhier to phlebitis, while in Scotland, Cullen epitomised the Scottish addiction to philosophical systematisation in his attribution of all ills to neurosis. There were one or two bright spots. Laennec (1781–1826) invented the stethoscope and established pulmonary tuberculosis as an entity, while to his younger Parisian colleague, Pierre Louis (1787–1872), we must attribute the inauguration of medical statistics, by his clear demonstration that blood-letting was worthless in the treatment of pneumonia. However, the finest medicine of the era was practised in London and Dublin. Marsden was only a little junior to Cheyne, whose name is still attached to an ominous variety of intermittent breathing, and a little senior to Corrigan who first described the typical "water-hammer" pulse of disease of the aortic valve. He was absolutely contemporaneous not only with Graves who delineated the clinical picture of thyroid overactivity, but also with that tremendous trio, Bright, Addison, and Hodgkin who enjoy eponymous fame in the fields of kidney, adrenal and glandular disease respectively. And when Marsden arrived in the metropolis, James Parkinson's career as general practitioner, political agitator, geologist and inventor of Parkinsonism had just closed.

It was perhaps not only because Marsden's interests were predominantly surgical rather than medical that he did not attach himself to any of the great men of Guy's, but went to Bart's as a pupil of Abernethy, a man more distinguished for his teaching, kindness and wit than for any significant contribution to knowledge. But, after all, Marsden was a clinician and philanthropist rather than a scientific pioneer. His approach to cholera was characteristic. He wrongly regarded the disease he encountered as entirely different from the endemic cholera of Asia, and he was firmly convinced that it was neither contagious nor infectious. We must reflect that Louis Pasteur did not evolve the germ theory of disease until the 1860s nor Koch discover the cholera vibrio until 1883. Marsden's view was orthodox, and even as late as the 1848–49 epidemic, drinking water was authoritatively exonerated by an eminent commission of the Royal College of Physicians. Paradoxically, it was Britain's first anaesthetist and epidemiologist, John Snow, who proved the water-borne nature of the infection when he dramatically arrested a major epidemic by tying up the Broad Street pump in 1854. Marsden may not have known much about cholera but his treatment was not irrational. He recognised the fatal role of loss of water from the body, and although he may possibly have contributed to it by giving massive purgative doses of calomel early in the course of the disease, these were always accompanied by the administration of vast amounts of water and salt, and in the grave stages by injecting salt solution into the veins, together with laudanum by mouth. It was to this perhaps intuitive appreciation of a complex biochemical situation combined with his aesthetic passion for cleanliness that the comparative excellence of Marsden's results in successive cholera epidemics must be attributed.

WILLIAM MARSDEN, THEN, was a philanthropist rather than a scientist, and by nature as well as from the circumstances of his times a purveyor of *care* rather than *cure*. If he were alive today where would he seek to exercise these qualities in the present context of British medicine?

If we look for a moment at our present predicament we can see the traces of the history of

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his time in ours, and observe—as usual—that things are different in degree rather than in essence. The great teaching hospitals no longer expect a letter of recommendation from a member of the Board of Governors—though even that died out only towards the end of the last century—but they continue to enjoy a lion's share of resources, of staff, and of prestige. Furthermore some are almost as selective as their 19th-century predecessors in their admission policies, though today they mostly plead educational rather than economic justification. They will certainly not turn away a case of syphilis or a dying patient; but they will go far to avoid or transfer a sufferer from chronic or mental illness, and to our shame we know that even today and under a comprehensive health service patients seeking admission are sometimes trundled from one hospital to another for reasons that do not always withstand critical scrutiny.

My own guess is that if Marsden were among us today he would be baffled by our priorities, or perhaps it would be better to say our lack of priorities. No doubt it could be explained to him that at a time when much of urban society is falling apart for lack of attention to human and environmental problems, contemporary concentration on space travel can be explained by the fact that lunar geology is no more than an accidental spin-off from the determination of the major powers to spy on one another more effectively and more continuously. But what would he make of modern medical technology?

I am sure he would be thrilled by the conquest of poliomyelitis and measles, which is in the classical tradition. He could hardly fail to be moved by the excitement that attends the remarkable success of the modern treatment of high blood pressure, chronic kidney failure, and severe depressive illness. But I suspect that he might find the modern general hospital not much less dissociated from the real medical needs of the community than the Guy's and Bart's of his day. Throughout the later part of the last century and up to the present time, our great hospitals have followed the example they set in his day. They have increasingly divorced themselves from the issues of patient care that were Marsden's prime concern, and have been even more obsessionally preoccupied with the short-term treatment of dramatic and potentially curable illness. There are good historical and logistic reasons for this policy. Nor can there be any doubt that within this brief our hospitals have made a great contribution and continue to make a great contribution not only to clinical medicine but to public health in the broad sense, rescuing many patients from acute medical and surgical disaster. But in fact acute medical and surgical disaster represents only a minute proportion even of the 10% of all illnesses that receive specialist treatment. Deliberately or implicitly, those of us whose lives have been spent in academic clinical medicine have averted our gaze from the major causes of public ill-health. I do not believe that William Marsden would be vastly impressed by intensive coronary care, cardiac transplantation, or surgery for spina bifida. I think his unerring eye would move at once to those areas of medical care where achievement is everywhere so much less impressive—to the problems of psychiatry; to the care of the mentally subnormal; to chronic illness of all kinds, including the neglected area of terminal care; and especially to the care of the elderly, the most rapidly growing and most neglected section of our population.

AGAIN, IF I HAD TO GUESS, I do not think he would devote his attention to formal psychiatry. In the last twenty years this subject has experienced a remarkable resurgence and, following the model of internal medicine, is well on the way to becoming one of its most prestigious as well as numerically its most important branch. That this development has been due to the self-interested activities of the drug companies rather than to the exertions of the profession should not blind us to the not unrealistic hope that much serious mental illness may be as controllable as bacterial infection by the end of the century. Marsden would certainly be moved by the plight of the mentally subnormal, but there is no reason why this should prove a growing problem, and indeed if it attracts the concentration of neurobiological, biochemical and genetic research that it deserves it could become a decreasing burden. In general, however, successful medical research cannot but increase the number of survivors to old age.

THANKS TO THE DEDICATED ATTENTION of a small group of clinicians there have recently been great improvements in the humane management of terminal illness. Here I have in mind most emphatically not the elaborate measures developed to maintain life in the already dead, but the bold use of drugs to make the patient's last weeks comfortable and tranquil. The work of these pioneers is not yet as widely applied as it should be, and some doctors are still ludicrously eager to "wean" patients with advanced malignant disease from their drugs, and add the ordeal of destructive neurosurgery to the other trials of the illness. Sometimes operation on the brain or spinal cord for intractable pain is both effective and heaven-sent, but most such patients can be made happier by the judicious

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use of such drugs as heroin, cocaine, and largactil, when effective analgesia may be mercifully reinforced by some clouding of consciousness and even mild euphoria. It is only a question of time before such practice becomes general.

It is less easy, alas, to feel confident about the care of chronic disease and the elderly. Many of the triumphs of modern curative medicine and surgery transform the victim of an acute and previously fatal illness into a state somewhere between almost normal medicated survival and disastrously protracted invalidism of a degree (for example, in some patients dependent on drugs of the cortisone group) that often makes the physician wish he had never embarked on the initial treatment. So the chronic patient will remain with us in both the organic and psychiatric spheres and his numbers are likely to increase.

This applies even more certainly to the elderly. There must be scarcely a family in the land that does not face the difficult problem of the care of aged relatives, with which our society is ill-equipped to cope. Maiden aunts are a thing of the past, spare rooms are almost as rare, and the total adult population is either out at work or wishes it were. The trouble is that this is both a medical and a social problem. Most of these elderly people are neither ill nor well. They do not require elaborate treatment, which in the very old is all too often cruel as well as inappropriate. What they do require is care of the kind that will keep them mobile, semi-independent, and in some sort of stimulating circulation. I think William Marsden might well have devoted his attention to this knotty problem and helped to produce some of the solutions that are so badly needed.

IT WOULD, OF COURSE, be an unpardonable exaggeration to suggest that the standard of our geriatric services in 1972 is in any way comparable with that of the general hospitals of 1828. Indeed, by international standards, British achievement in this field is more than respectable, and we have done a great deal since geriatrics began in the "chronic sick wards" in the 1930s. Especially since the inception of the national health service we have developed many facilities for the care of the aged and established it as an important part of internal medicine. Nevertheless, institutional facilities in many parts of the country are grossly inadequate and sometimes not even civilised. And although medical education ought by now to mirror the great importance of the problems of old age in contemporary medicine, the Teaching Hospitals have been slow to accept responsibility in this field and have especially neglected its educational importance. In the field of community services the unevenness of local authority provision is truly remarkable. Twenty years after the inauguration of Britain's health service nearly a quarter of our county boroughs had made no special provision for housing the elderly, and nearly half our county councils provided less than 50 home helps per 100,000 of population. Even where the provision looks good on paper it is often woefully inadequate in operation. There is little continuity in the home help service, and the wait for a hostel place or hospital bed often seems interminable. (The contrast with such provision in the Soviet Union as well as in parts of Canada is a sad commentary on our social conscience.) Furthermore, the 1969 projections of expenditure on the health service—in which even a Labour chancellor cheerfully envisaged a declining rate of growth in health services expenditure—turn a wilfully blind eye to steeply rising social needs inescapably evident in figures that are already public knowledge.

WHAT, THEN, WOULD BE the major problems faced by anyone anxious to undertake the development of geriatric services that could parallel Marsden's contribution to the general hospitals of a century and a half ago?

Between 1901 and 1966 there has been a fourfold increase in the total population above the age of 65, the percentage of whom has increased from 5% to 12%. More than half the "chronic" patients in general practice are over 60, and more than half of all who survive to the age of 70 require regular medical attention. The majority of old people live at home, many with relatives, but about two millions without a nearby relative, a million-and-a-half entirely alone. They make severe demands on domiciliary services; they use more doctor's time, more drugs and more ancillary services. The 300,000 who live in institutions are divided between Health Service hospitals and local authority homes. The 12% of the total population that is over 65 occupies more than a third of all hospital beds; many of those in hospital would otherwise be living alone.

This present increase in the proportion of the elderly in the population reflects a fall in birth-rate early in the century rather than the improved chances of survival in childhood which have operated for the last thirty years. These have yet to be reflected in an anticipated increase in the proportion of the aged during the closing decades of the present century. The problem is therefore inexorable.

The demand for medical care in this connection may be alarming but it is surely in no way surprising. Except for occasional acute illnesses

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most of us remain fit until the sixties, and it would be a ridiculous disposition of medical resources that denied them to the age-group that stands in most need. The drama of the situation is sometimes exaggerated. The number of elderly people abandoned by their families is small, and many of those who live proudly independent existences do so voluntarily and in spite of family pressure. But it is beyond question the socially isolated who make special demands on medical services, and under present circumstances many of their needs are inadequately met.

IN TRYING TO MAKE a logical analysis of this problem I believe Marsden would have grasped at once the difference between the care of the chronic sick and that of the aged. Good geriatric medicine is in the first instance concerned with early, accurate, and expert diagnosis of illnesses of the elderly which are often acute or sub-acute, and its function is to forestall and prevent their development into chronic incapacity. Geriatrics is the preventive as well as the clinical medicine of old age. A good example is the frequency with which mental confusion or depression in the elderly arises from intercurrent but inconspicuous physical illness, and can rapidly be relieved by the effective treatment of such conditions as urinary or pulmonary infection, mild kidney failure from prostatic enlargement, early heart failure, thyroid deficiency, or pernicious anaemia.

But before proceeding to the care of the elderly, let me first devote a moment to the quite separate problem of the chronic sick. I believe this to be primarily a problem of logistics, and it is seen in its most classical form in my own field of neurology.

In the context of the Teaching or Special Hospital the patient referred to a neurological physician remains under his supervision so long as expert treatment is required. In the case of epilepsy this may be for life—unless the epilepsy is so severe as to require institutional care; the paradox that the expert must often pass on the severest cases requires no emphasis. But if forms of treatment specifically regarded as the province of the neurologist are no longer applicable—as in the case of brain tumour after operation or chronic multiple sclerosis—the patient more often than not leaves the specialist's orbit either for a back room at home or a miscellaneous ward for the chronic sick in an ex-workhouse. This is not because the neurologist wants to disavow responsibility for the chronic case. He knows he could learn much from studying the later as well as the earlier phases of organic nervous diseases, to say nothing of the salutary lessons to be learned from ultimate post-mortem examination. But our hospitals are not organised on this basis. The general hospitals still bear the stamp of their 19th-century voluntary origin and fight shy of responsibility for chronic illness. This is far too often hidden away from the public, the medical student, and the specialist, and is left in hands that are often devoted but not always highly skilled. And if autopsy is performed it will more often than not be undertaken as a routine chore by a run-of-the-mill pathologist with no special interest and no informed clinician to jog his elbow and learn and teach the lessons on which improvement in clinical method depends. This is, incidentally, one area of medicine where we are far behind many of our colleagues on the continent of Europe, where the physician of today is often still in a position to emulate the example of his 19th-century predecessors in following his personal cases over the years and ultimately to the post-mortem room.

I believe Marsden would share my view that the care of patients with chronic disease will be significantly improved only when they remain under the general supervision of the appropriate specialist throughout the course of their illnesses. The corollary of this arrangement is that every major general hospital must have its own chronic wing serviced by its regular medical staff, and that this should be either on the site of the parent institution or easily accessible.

So much for the care of the chronic sick. We now return to our major preoccupation of geriatrics.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, a very considerable overall shortage of geriatric hospital beds. Some districts have less than one such bed per thousand of the total population, and few have two. But very little operational research has been undertaken within the health service into the number of beds needed in a community, to say nothing of the requirements of populations with different social circumstances and age-distributions. It has been estimated that if, and when, community supportive services are adequate, ten beds per thousand of the population over the age of 65 would probably meet present needs except where the social environment is especially unfavourable. Needless to say, local provision should also take future population trends into account. Few regions meet the bed requirements, and none furnishes effective and adequate community services. With regard to staffing at every level geriatrics is one of the Cinderellas of the service. One department in William Marsden's native county seems to run 630 beds on one consultant, one registrar, one-and-a-half senior house officers, and some peripheral general practitioner help. In the nursing field the myth dies hard that geriatric departments can get by with less nurses than

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medical or surgical units. In fact, of course, they need a higher ratio of nurses both in the acute and rehabilitation wards, though in the latter auxiliaries can play a prominent and valuable part. One point that must be remembered is that while centralisation pays dividends in the provision of highly specialised facilities it is less applicable in the care of the elderly. The services must be built into the community served, and although very small units tend to be expensive some degree of decentralisation taps useful sources of staff recruitment that may otherwise remain unused, and encourages the voluntary helpers whose work with the aged is invaluable. It is highly unlikely that new buildings for geriatrics will be made available on anything like the scale required. Fortunately, there are many elderly but not absolutely impossible hospitals up and down the country, and especially in densely populated areas, that can be adapted and cheerfully refurbished internally to meet this need much more effectively than that of general hospital provision.

Several types of hospital accommodation are required by a comprehensive geriatric service. Acute illnesses require all the facilities of a general medical ward or a similarly equipped geriatric diagnostic and assessment unit. The main function of the specifically geriatric wards is active rehabilitation. Between these two there is room for an intermediate type of accommodation used for convalescence, for those requiring intermittent hospital care, and to take patients especially during the easier summer months so that their families may enjoy a holiday. The demand for admission is, fortunately, seasonal and always maximal in the earlier months of the year. A third type of accommodation is represented by the Day Hospital which is a cheap, valuable, and insufficiently developed concept; one limiting factor in its exploitation is transport provision, which is rarely adequate. Some long-term beds are also required for those who cannot be rehabilitated. Increasingly these comprise the demented who block beds at every level, who cannot be managed at home and whose growing numbers threaten to swamp every department of the District General Hospitals. This very serious situation can be met only by collaboration between geriatricians, psychiatrists, and directors of social services, all of whom must have increased resources. (In this context the Seebohm dissociation between health and welfare is proving predictably disastrous.)

ALL THESE FACILITIES should be under the control of a team led by consultant geriatricians, and as in the case of chronic illness at other ages the intractable case should not be passed down the line to a lower level of care, as happens in some parts of the world. Furthermore, geriatrics is predominantly the general medicine of a particular but very large age-group and should be an integral part of it. It is absolutely essential that the geriatrician should first be a good physician, able to take his place in the medical team, able to share in the care of patients in other age groups, and standing in for his general medical colleagues when need be. It is where this is recognised and acted upon that the best geriatrics flourishes and where recruitment to the speciality presents fewest problems.

But, of course, the problem is complex and goes far beyond the provision of hospital care. It would certainly not be solved by a *pro rata* rise in bed numbers to parallel the projected increase in the elderly population at risk. Community care is all-important. Its provision is even less adequate and more uneven than that of hospital facilities, and the interface between hospital and community care is the most sensitive and most vulnerable part of the service. In this connection the local authorities' performance has been generally poor. Few approach even the national average, to say nothing of the appreciably higher recommended norms—which themselves are none too high. Already the hospitals can rehabilitate more of the elderly than the social services can reintegrate into the community.

Indeed the geriatric hospital discharge-rate and bed-turnover depends in the main on two factors—the level of staffing of the unit, and the adequacy of neighbourhood community services. Very few areas furnish welfare homes for the frail but otherwise healthy aged, and fewer still the sheltered and inconspicuously supervised housing that is now widely regarded as preferable for many such cases, on anything like an appropriate scale. The same applies to the very economic provision of Day Hospitals. In all these connections the historical dichotomy between the health and welfare services has inhibited the development of an effectively integrated service, and the local authorities have mostly failed to fulfil their responsibilities, some of them frankly admitting that they are unwilling to spend local ratepayers' money to relieve pressure on the centrally funded hospital service. If close integration of the geriatric and the general medical staff is vital to the effective functioning of the hospital side of the service, similar integration between the community doctor and the central hospital is equally essential to maintain the fragile link between the two branches of the service. The continued, illogical, and artificial division between Health and Welfare that is maintained in the latest proposals for the re-

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organisation of the health service will consolidate a very unsatisfactory present situation and will ensure that collaboration continues to encounter considerable practical difficulties.

There are many other ways, apart from welfare homes and day hospitals, in which community services are vital but generally inadequate. Many old people who genuinely require medical attention can never bring themselves to request it, and the help of local authority social workers is indispensable to the general practitioners in the case-finding activities that represent first-line medicine in this context. Active case-finding is imperative if the facilities provided are to be effectively used and if tragedies are to be averted. An adequate home-help service would, in itself, reduce the number of demands for urgent admission to hospital which constitute so large a part of geriatric practice, and which could largely be avoided by an organised continuing service. Such simple things as a shopping service, a telephone for the elderly living alone, and transport provision to attend day hospitals or outpatient clinics would in themselves prolong the economic solution of independent existence at home for many border-line cases. The same applies in the case of mobile meal services, laundry facilities, and the provision of some community physicians with a special responsibility and interest in the care of the elderly. It is not merely that local authorities are slow to fulfil their obligation to furnish reasonable standards in these connections, but that by the standards of the hospital service their machinery is unthinkably slow and cumbersome. The local authority has a statutory obligation for example to make minor alterations to the houses of disabled people so as to enable them to obtain access by wheelchair. In cases of this kind within my own clinical experience the interminable delay often involved in undertaking such work has led to prolonged and unnecessary retention in hospital and finally to the patient paying from his own pocket to have the work done quickly at his own expense.

PSYCHO-GERIATRICS presents a special and increasing problem. Delirium, depression, and dementia account for 95% of this field, and two of the three are eminently curable. Many acute psychiatric episodes can and should be perfectly adequately treated in a geriatric ward just as in a medical ward. Psychiatry is too serious a subject, and psychiatric illnesses are too common, for the subject to be left entirely to psychiatrists; and every geriatrician, like every physician, should be expected to have some clinical ability in this field just as in cardiac or respiratory disease. There is room also in each area for a psychiatrist with a special interest in the mental disorders of the elderly, holding a joint appointment in psychiatry and in geriatrics with responsibilities in both mental and geriatric hospitals. A few forward-looking authorities have already developed psycho-geriatric day hospitals, and these may play a valuable part in permitting the steadily increasing load of mental illness in the elderly to be shared between the family and the community. There is a present fashion for the early discharge of psychotic patients back to their families, a procedure that has the blessing of central authority, and it makes a contribution to the favourable showing of mental hospitals in terms of turnover and recovery rate. However the geriatrician, less institution-bound and more closely linked with the home conditions, is often better able than the psychiatrist to appreciate the impact of such discharge on the patient's family and the immeasurable but very real economic and emotional disturbance it may occasion to a wide circle. Collaboration between the two specialties should teach the psychiatrist the lessons that geriatrics has learned in the matter of flexibility—the value for example of periods spent in hospital, at home or in attendance at a day hospital for the mildly demented patient rather than the orthodox long-term institutionalisation which is more likely to suggest itself to physicians working in the large mental hospital.

THESE, THEN, ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES to which I believe William Marsden would have addressed himself if he were amongst us today with aspirations similar to those that moved him in 1828.

It is, of course, possible that I am wrong and that he would like so many of us be first infatuated and then seduced by scientific technology and become a computer diagnostician or a molecular biologist. But I doubt it. I think he would try and evolve ways of meeting the medical and social needs of the chronic sick and elderly, which constitute the major problem of contemporary medicine, just as he so splendidly grasped and met the needs of the sick poor in 1828.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Habit of Getting Rhodesia Wrong

By J. W. M. Thompson

FOR MANY PEOPLE, the strangest detail of recent events in Rhodesia has been the undisguised surprise of the white population at the extent of the black discontent revealed by the operations of the Pearce Commission. Even after the commissioners had arrived in Salisbury to test the "acceptability" of the proposed settlement, most whites assumed there would be no difficulty in carrying the deal through. Mr Ian Smith himself was confidently predicting a ready and sweeping acceptance of the terms only a few hours before the outbreaks of rioting and bloodshed began. When the Commission finally reported that the settlement was not acceptable to "The people of Rhodesia as a whole," the whites' anger could be attributed in part to the pain of discovering how wrong they had been. On the face of it, this ignorance seems bewildering.

There are, as it happens, historical precedents. The earliest years of Rhodesia as a white man's country, in the 1890s, produced ferocious uprisings by each of the two African peoples whose subjugation was a necessary part of the colonising process. These, too, were unforeseen. The racially-split society which has now existed in the country for the greater part of a century has failed, in all that time, to achieve any but flimsy and unreliable means of communication between black and white.

When Mr Smith remarked in November 1971 that Rhodesia had "the happiest Africans in the world" he did not seem to most white Rhodesians to be making an extravagant or provocative claim. They simply did not know enough about the Africans to have reason to question it. The combination of years of apparent tranquillity and conspicuous economic development had encouraged comfortable assumptions. The reality, although it involved upwards of nine-tenths of the population, was out of sight and out of mind. It required a violent demonstration of the majority's detestation of the political and social system to make the whites realise, temporarily at least, how profoundly they had misunderstood their own country.

Misunderstanding is not confined to the whites in Rhodesia, either. When Rhodesian affairs have been discussed at Westminster in recent months there has been a persistent strain of unreality running through the speeches. Perhaps one should not be surprised at the lingering belief that a residue of power or influence still remains with the British Government. It must take time for politicians to awaken to the fact of their diminished capacities, much as a ruined millionaire is likely to rid himself only slowly of the impulses and habits of affluence. Nevertheless, it was curious to observe the Foreign Secretary being urged to "insist" upon courses of action by the Rhodesian rulers when quite clearly he had no power to do anything of the sort. Even more striking was the grotesque miscalculation of the effect of sanctions after the Rhodesian Front had declared unilateral independence in 1965 and the widespread failure (especially among those in Britain who count themselves the blacks' sympathisers) to assess accurately the significance of the Pearce Commission.

With regard to Pearce, it was supposed that the blacks had been so effectively gagged and rendered supine by the white authorities that they would not have the faintest opportunity of making their true feelings known. Lord Caradon, a man of exceptional experience in colonial and post-colonial matters, called the Pearce Commission "a farce" even before it had begun its work. It is odd that Mr Smith, who would not agree with Lord Caradon on many things, used the same language to condemn it, but in his case after it had published its report.

FEW CAN INDULGE in feelings of easy superiority at this chronicle of error, because few have escaped the general habit of getting Rhodesia wrong. It was obvious in Rhodesia, when the commission was at work, that even those whites on the spot and with a real understanding of the blacks' frustrations often much underestimated their willingness and ability to make themselves heard. The opening for political action created by the arrival of the commission disclosed a resentment which was quite simply far greater than anything most people had bargained for, and this remains true even when one has made due allowance for intimidation by political activists, skilfully organised agitation, and so on.

This enormous ignorance must be recognised as one of the central facts in the Rhodesian

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condition if any better understanding of it is to be reached. The Africans may represent some 95 per cent of the total population, but they have been consigned to a state of partial invisibility so far as the whites are concerned. This does not depend solely upon the geographical separation of the races, although naturally this is important. Most blacks live remote from the white districts in tribal areas, and even those who have entered the white man's economy inhabit townships which not only provide a standard of living far below that enjoyed in the white suburbs, but which are also set apart from them physically. The denial of positions of responsibility to blacks, coupled with the almost total absence of any social intermingling of the two races, completes the system of impenetrable barriers which separates the majority from the minority.

There are many exceptions of course: but it is not unfair to make the generalisation that the average white Rhodesian is fully aware of black Rhodesians in one capacity only, that of cheap, available, deferential labour. That he is critically dependent upon this labour goes without saying, but he seldom finds himself in a position to communicate with its providers in any but the simplest or most superficial of ways. The situation might be said to parallel Western man's dependence upon the motor-car. This dependence may be inescapable, but few feel themselves required to pursue the study of automobile engineering.

It is a state of affairs which white Rhodesians do not conceal because they do not usually feel any need to apologise for it. Secure in their conviction of racial superiority, and long encouraged to believe that the Africans (excepting a handful of "trouble-makers") were contented, well-looked-after and grateful for the transformation brought about by the white man, they pride themselves that their system is a decent blend of realism and justice. Again there is no occasion for easy superiority. It seems highly probable that if the present 250,000 whites were all to be replaced by a similar number chosen at random from the United Kingdom, there would be no great change in the attitudes of the ruling section of the population.

NEITHER IS THERE any obscurity about the limitations placed upon the African's freedom to advance himself within the existing social framework. These are fully detailed in G. C. Grant's recent report for the Minority Rights Group,[1] but they are not hidden in Rhodesia. One need only look at the statistics published in Salisbury to see that the average earnings of an African are about one-tenth of those of a European, or that what is sometimes spoken of as "parity" of expenditure on education means that the sum spent by the state on the education of white children is roughly equal to that spent on ten times as many African children. No African holds a commission in the armed forces or the police, or is allowed any position of seniority in the civil service, or is likely in almost any other walk of life to attain a place higher than that which every white man would consider his barest minimum right.

This relegation of the African to an inferior role is openly acknowledged, as openly as those signs which are displayed outside hotels or other places of public resort, stating that "the right of admission is reserved"—in other words, that black people are excluded, except of course as waiters or servants of some other kind. Africans are deemed to be unfitted ("at present") for any other role. The post-War influx of immigrants from Europe has produced no effective challenge to the system. Every white immigrant (and today about half the white population was born outside Rhodesia) takes it for granted that he will have cheap African labour to perform the menial jobs in his house and his garden. At his place of work a similar assumption is made. The pattern of white masters and black servants runs through the country from top to bottom. Even in the tribal areas, where no whites live, the authority of the white Government is total, and is personified by the district commissioners and other white administrators (often devoted and hard-working paternalist officials) who possess the real power.

THE SYSTEM IS SO DEEPLY-ROOTED that the ordinary white visitor to Rhodesia does not find it hard to accept, for the time being at any rate, the assumptions upon which life is conducted. He is unlikely to see much bullying of black by white. He may see a black man being humbled in a shop by being told to stand aside until all the white customers have been served; he will note the habit, practised by women and children as well as men, of giving orders to black servants in abrupt, military tones; he will possibly feel uneasy when whites conduct conversations in the presence of black men as though the African had no existence at any level higher than that of a domestic animal. On the other hand he will see plenty of instances of kindness by white people towards black. He will recognise that most of the Africans do indeed seem to be simple, unsophisticated, poorly educated people, and he will meet white Rhodesians who are anxious to further African welfare and who exert themselves to this end. He may well conclude, provided he keeps clear of political trouble, that

[1] *The Africans' Predicament in Rhodesia.* By G. C. GRANT. Minority Rights Group, 30p.

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Rhodesia is in many ways a fortunate country which manages to rub along pretty well in the sunshine in spite of the glaring inequalities which prevail.

There is, for such a visitor, something initially seductive about the Englishness of much of the white society, for it is of course the Englishness of an earlier epoch, buttressed by armies of servants and spared the congestion and discomforts of Megalopolis. At the same time white Rhodesians are friendly, informal, and not much bothered by questions of class or accent. The working-class immigrant from Europe customarily experiences a sense of liberation and an enhancement of personality when he settles there. Doubts about the moral basis of society are given scant attention by such settlers.

Even though they are for the most part office or factory workers, they tend to conceive themselves to be out-of-doors, vigorous heirs of the Pioneers of 1890, a romantic self-image which discloses itself in many small ways, such as the habit of wearing "safari suits" even when sitting at an office desk. They make a cult of being "practical" and in their eyes the African falls infinitely short of the European in this respect. White men created the country and only white men know how to run it—humorous stories of black servants' lack of practical ability are common coin of conversation—why should they hand over all that the white man has built to people who cannot be depended upon to boil an egg? Look at Zambia, Ghana, the Congo, etc. etc. The arguments follow predictable lines. If, as is often the case, the white immigrant has acquired a house which handsomely realises the world-wide suburban dream, with several acres of ground and a swimming pool and tennis court as well, his belief in the virtues of the *status quo* is powerfully reinforced by emotions which are, in the simplest of human terms, perfectly understandable.

AND ALL THE TIME, there is the white man's remoteness from the black millions to fortify his sense of comfort, and the difficulty of interpreting the handful of docile, faintly comic black servants with whom he experiences some meagre form of human relationship in terms of a huge, rapidly expanding, increasingly disaffected population somewhere over the horizon. Rhodesia shows how easy it is for one race to live at a great distance from another even though the two are inhabiting the same country. Frequently in conversation with whites one is assured that separation is quite the best arrangement, that both sides favour it and profit from it. Nevertheless, it is the scarcity of bridges between the races which explains the European's habit of being wrong about the forces which are working within the country, of failing to predict what, once it has happened, quickly seems to have been inevitable. It is also a potent element in itself in the creation of black discontent. The mere visitor may well be better placed than the settler to appreciate that darkest Rhodesia lies all about the smoothly-functioning comforts of the white man's society, and that what really happens there, few white men can know.

Hinc illae lacrimae. Hence Ian Smith's belief that the Africans would readily endorse the settlement, which distantly recalled the conviction among the white settlers of the 1890s that (to quote the eye-witness account[2] by Cecil Rhodes's friend, Frederick Courteney Selous) "no rebellion on the part of the Matabele was to be apprehended" until that bloodbath had actually occurred. Hence the grounds for fearing that, one day, the issues between the two races will be resolved, not by communication, but by a final act of violence.

Furthermore, the incomprehension is recip-

[2] F. C. Selous, *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia* (1896). This author acted as guide to the Pioneer Column, and is commemorated in Salisbury by Selous Avenue and a plaque in the Anglican cathedral.

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rocal, as Lawrence Vambe makes plain in his recently-published account of the Rhodesian tragedy as seen through African eyes.[3] He, an educated, perceptive black Rhodesian with experience as teacher, journalist and civil servant, is yet impelled to write, "The white community in Southern Rhodesia is a complete puzzle to me, a concentration of irrationality. I cannot repeat this fact too often." Such a failure to connect is dispiriting indeed to anyone with hopes of seeing a non-racialist state established south of the Zambesi.

In fact, Mr Vambe's object in this book is not to study the mysterious whites but to make the blacks less mysterious. It is a re-telling of the history of the white occupation of the land, but as seen, for once, not by a white observer but by the Shona people, and preserved by them in the oral history which Mr Vambe absorbed during his childhood in the 1920s. That it, too, is not necessarily free from deluded notions of the past is not in such a case a weakness. Even if the lives of the inhabitants of Mashonaland before the Pioneer Column arrived were in fact much less innocent and agreeable than this narrative suggests, the fact that such a view of their forbears' world is accepted among the Africans is a significant element in their present disaffection.

Any white man trying to understand Rhodesia should read Mr Vambe and so gain a glimpse of the sense of bitterness and betrayal which exists within the "happiest Africans." He also provides, incidentally, a counter-balance to all the heroic versions of the arrival of that dubious band of adventurers known as "the Pioneers" in what is now Salisbury. As he heard the story many times over in Mashonganyika village, initially the new arrivals were regarded as little more than a spectacle of extraordinary entertainment.

> My father, who was a very young man at the time, said that these people, with their long, animal-like hair and beards, wild eyes, uniforms, hats and shoes, as well as horses, ox-wagons and other accoutrements, were like a circus. For several weeks, all the Shona society around Harare would be irresistibly drawn to gape and often split their sides in wonder and amusement. . . . A more friendly welcome to any occupying power it would be difficult to find in the annals of history.

The blacks, in short, were wrong about the whites from the start. It was not long, of course, before they understood their original error and learned that these outlandish arrivals meant henceforth to be the masters of Mashonaland, supported by the sjambok and the gun. The Shona people saw the land appropriated, their men pressed into forced labour, their primitive freedom abolished. In turn, the whites were wrong about the blacks, failing to foresee that a rebellion of terrible violence was in the making. When it came, they crushed it with equal ferocity. The black people's servitude has been moderated at almost every point in the intervening decades, but it has never been broken. The whites have persisted in their complacency.

Rhodesian history in this African reading is discordant at every note with the tunes of glory which the average white Rhodesian carries in his mind when he thinks of the Pioneers and their energetic successors. The great divide which reaches across Rhodesian society does not only keep apart, say, the followers of Mr Ian Smith and those of Bishop Abel Muzorewa. It stretches back into the past, permitting two separate and incompatible versions of historical truth to flourish in the same country. Separation and estrangement are continuous. The white man sees with understandable pride all that his race has achieved in the alien setting and forgets the rest; he may grumble about the parking problems in Salisbury or because sanctions have adversely affected the quality of the television programmes, but he is more likely to talk about the prospects for economic expansion which "his" country enjoys. The African preserves quite different memories and foretells another future.

To quote again from F. C. Selous in 1896:

> From the black man's point of view the white man is probably not necessary as a factor in the prosperity of the country. He could get along very well without him. Unfortunately we cannot manage without the black man; he is absolutely necessary for the development of the country on the white man's lines.

The same idea, tamed and refined as befits the less candid times in which we live, inspires the gentler dominion which Selous's successors exercise today over the descendants of those black men who laughed so uproariously at the white men's unfamiliar antics. Perhaps the white Rhodesians should give more thought to their own history. Mr Vambe records that his Shona grandmother, who remembered Rhodes and Selous and the rest coming among her people, and whose detestation of white men was rooted in their treacherous friendship for the Africans in the early, tentative days of exploration, used to say, again and again, "We fed them, but they bit us afterwards." White Rhodesians should certainly read Mr Vambe's book, because it would give them something by way of a bridge across their country's terrible chasm. Alas for such an optimistic thought. They will not do so, because the Rhodesian censor has already prohibited its import into the country.

[3] *An Ill-fated People.* By LAWRENCE VAMBE. Heinemann, £3.50.

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Miseries & Splendours of the Short Story

By Paul Theroux

THE ENGLISH SHORT STORY writer resembles the Russian writer whose work is considered hateful and disaffected by the Kremlin. Both men have to send their stories abroad to be published and appreciated. The half-dozen outlets for short stories in England, only one or two of them monthly magazines, can hardly accommodate story writers of the achievement of Angus Wilson, L. P. Hartley, William Sansom, V. S. Pritchett, Gabriel Fielding, Francis King, Muriel Spark, William Trevor, Elizabeth Taylor—and there must be many more. The short story is being written as vigorously in this country as it always has, but it is seldom published here with any vigour. Typically, the English writer's story appears in an American magazine; it is collected and the volume of stories receives a cursory notice, an abbreviated paragraph simply indicating its publication and a lightning glance at its contents. It is discouraging, and publishers have begun to consider short stories an obligatory but uncommercial philanthropy, a gesture for culture for which they will be respected but not rewarded. It is an attitude the poet knows well, and it has something to do with the decline of the monthly magazine which welcomed poetry and stories; now both poet and short story writer are regarded as cranks, hobbyists, part-timers.

A short story is a twenty-minute read, but surely the pleasure of the short story is not the collection, for no collection can be read straight through like a novel. One stops and ponders after each story, and with the best stories one feels like closing the book and saving the rest for later. It is uniquely suited, like a poem, for a magazine where on its discovery the reader gets a little thrill. Few English readers are ardent magazine subscribers; that they are regular library-goers (unlike Americans, who are members of book clubs) must account for the unpopularity of English monthlies and the appearance of stories in collections. And that new phenomenon, the televised story, has grown out of the public's indifference to the magazine story.

So William Trevor, an immensely gifted short story writer, is known as a writer of television plays, though all the plays he has written have been adaptations of his short stories. But you can hardly blame him. His new collection, *The Ballroom of Romance*[1]—two or three of the stories have appeared on television—confirms the reputation he gained on the publication of his previous collection, *The Day We Got Drunk On Cake* (best since *The Wrong Set*, best since the war, critics said). Last year, in a reflective piece on English writers in general, a literary editor suggested that Mr Trevor might try travelling to some equatorial outpost, a former colony or infant tropical republic, and writing about it. The suggestion was well-intended and may have been prompted by a suspicion that having turned up such surprising creatures in what were thought to be rather ordinary London suburbs, he might do the same in, say, Tunapuna, Kandy or the suburbs of Lahore. Ivy Eckdorf caused quite a bit of talk in O'Neill's hotel, but what if she had taken her camera to Raffles in Singapore! In places that are familiar and unremarkable Mr Trevor has acquainted us with the strange and startling: consider those excitable geriatrics in *The Old Boys*, the odd assortment of residents in *The Boarding House*, Mrs Eckdorf, Miss Gomez.

The stories in *The Ballroom of Romance* are set in England and Ireland, and look who he has found: Miss Awpit, Mrs Maugham, Mr Gipe and Mr Belhatchet, Wragget, Dympna and Mr Dicey. You don't have to know much more than

[1] *The Ballroom of Romance*. By WILLIAM TREVOR. Bodley Head, £2.25.

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their names. It is plain that Miss Awpit looks after mad old Mrs Maugham; Gipe is a handyman; and Belhatchet is the man in "Kinkies" who drugged a poor girl's orange juice. Wragget —who else?—was beaten at Digby-Hunter's school, and died, and Dympna the serving girl is going to tell the police. Mr Dicey is the postman who steams letters open.

" 'Wragget' is a terrifying name," I said to a man. His reply was, "You scare easily." Maybe so, but it would be hard to find a better one for this poor wretch. When a Trevor character is sympathetic he is awarded a sympathetic name, like Malcolmson in "Access to the Children", or Eleanor who appears in two stories, first as a schoolgirl in "Nice Day at School" and then as Belhatchet's victim (she is ten years older) in "Kinkies." Mr Trevor's style matches the ingenuity of his naming; it is spare and filled with suggestion—the sentence " '*vederci*,' said Mr Belhatchet, replacing his green telephone" is worth a whole page of description. But the characters are more than their names, weirdness is not their only attribute, and though the characters in Mr Trevor's novels are quite different from his short story characters (the former are several degrees more perverse than the latter, as well as—usually—from a different social class), Mr Trevor's achievement has been to create, by means of the clearest and most original prose in this generation and a compassionate balance of fascination and sympathy, real people of flesh and blood out of characters another writer would dismiss as goons or drudges.

It is for the women in this collection that one feels most deeply. Indeed, the thread that runs through all the stories is of brittle or urgent femininity thwarted by rather boorish maleness. Mr Trevor's men are feckless, or else malicious snobs, or drunkards, or comradely and exclusive old boys; his women are victims of, at once, their own strength and the men's weakness, isolated by their longings or by the perversity of their husbands or lovers. Malcolmson in "Access to the Children" has forced a separation on his wife while he lived briefly with his American girlfriend Diana; but the story is of his decline, of his wife's fortitude, and at the point when one believes there might be a reconciliation one realises how his wife's love permitted his infidelity, and how, having taken unfair advantage of this love, he has risked and lost everything, including the attention of his children. Eleanor in "Nice Day at School" and Bridie in the title story cling to an idea of love and romance while understanding that they will have to face a life with louts. Mavie tries hard to please Mr McCarthy in "The Forty-seventh Saturday", but he remains a visitor, almost a client, and will not let her love shake him out of the routine of his fantasy. And so it goes, wives and lovers getting short shrift, and even accepting it when they are warned away from it as in "The Grass Widows." This is one of the best in the collection; here, a woman late in life realises how boring and trivial her husband is, and in ironic circumstances attempts to save a newly-married woman from the same fate; but the younger woman is offended by the warning and finally chatted into accepting her husband's immaturity and inattention.

Some of the stories are heartrending, but Mr Trevor writes with a light touch, without sentimentality and always with humour. There is a crotchety precision about his narration; what other writer would be able to get away with the sentence, "No alcoholic liquor was ever served in the Ballroom of Romance, the premises not being licensed for this added stimulant"? He is the master of exasperation, of the person speaking at length in tones of formal annoyance; and he is at his best when dealing with a condition of lucidity one has always thought of as madness. His real skill lies in his ability to portray this behaviour as a heightened condition of life; in his work there is no madness, but there is much suffering.

THERE ARE A NUMBER of types who qualify as William Trevor characters. If there were such a person as an Elizabeth Taylor character she would be a shy, middle-aged woman, knowledgeable about flowers, who makes the best *pâté* in her part of Surrey. That is the person who springs to mind, but it is really not as simple as that, and in *The Devastating Boys*[2] Mrs Taylor's characters are various—package tourists, honeymooners, innocent (and not so innocent) children, suburbanites, late-blooming lovers, and even a West Indian. Her narration is meticulous and unobtrusive; her characters are proud of the refinements of their domesticity, and Mrs Taylor supplies them with time-filling habits and pastimes. In "Sisters" Mrs Mason "baked beautiful Victoria sponges for bring-and-buy sales, arranged flowers, made *gros-point* covers for her chairs, gave tea parties, even sometimes, daringly, sherry-parties . . ." and in "The Excursion to the Source" Polly has spent most of her twenty-seven years "sticking foreign stamps crookedly into an album. Besides stamps, she collected Victorian bun pennies, lustre jugs, fans, sea-shells, matchboxes and pressed wild flowers." But the stories are much more than adventures with sponges and

[2] *The Devastating Boys*. By ELIZABETH TAYLOR. Chatto & Windus, £2.25.

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bun pennies: for Mrs Mason the habits are only part of her reality, but the story concerns an intrusion by a literary biographer who is writing about Mrs Mason's sister Marion. Marion, now dead, was an outrageous bohemian writer who lived a wild life with some other gadabouts ("They were all notorious: that was Mrs Mason's word for them") and, pressed for childhood memories and details of scandal, Mrs Mason is upset and angry. The story suggests vast disturbance, the kind of betrayal and violation that James described in *The Aspern Papers*. The habits listed in "The Excursion" are haphazard; Polly's excursion is a brief affair, several quarrels and her accidental death.

Mrs Taylor's art is in leaving much unsaid, casting a significant shadow, high-lighting an action and allowing the reader to complete the story. "Tall Boy", the West Indian's London adventure, is the exception to this, and it is her weakest story. "Flesh" succeeds because in withholding physical love from the fumbling vacationers she concentrates on their tenderness; in "Hotel du Commerce" some honeymooners overhear a vulgar and angry couple arguing in the next room, and the next morning, nursing a small bitterness for each other, they see the older couple whispering endearments, for part of what the honeymooners heard was the act of love. Another paragraph or a sentence of explanation would ruin either of these stories. She ends "The Fly-Paper", one of the most horrifying stories I have ever read, just seconds before a girl who has been abducted begins to scream. It seems such an ordinary story, but it is the logic—so natural, so ordinary—that makes it in the end so chilling. A woman helps a young girl out of an awkward situation with a lecherous-sounding man; she invites the girl for tea and the girl is calmed. "I must have everything sweet and fresh," says the woman, and it sounds like idle chatter about biscuits and tea. Then in succession the girl's glimpse of the fly-paper ("Some of the flies were still half alive, and striving hopelessly to free themselves"), an unexpected visitor, the knowledge of what is about to happen, and the sentence about things sweet and fresh becomes positively blood-curdling. It is the best sort of macabre story, for the anxiety, the panic, and the suppressed scream are the reader's, not the victim's.

YOU MEET characters in short stories that you never meet in novels: the form often permits the brief unexplained entrance of the truly strange, and for many writers an uncharacteristic incident. In her Preface to *The Demon Lover* Elizabeth Bowen remarked that

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while she had many times introduced the element of the supernatural into her short stories she had never done so with her novels. One can think of many authors who write ghost stories or tales of the uncanny, but not many who write novels on the same subject. The story form is perfect for the ghost, the horror, the inexplicable—or simply the uncharacteristic occurrence.

Yevgeny Zamyatin is known to us as the Russian author of the utopian novel *We*, but this novel does little to prepare us for his collection of stories *The Dragon*[3], which is being published here for the first time. *We* is full of numbered comrades, futuristic torturing and the beginnings of a revolt in a society dominated by a dictator called "The Benefactor." The stories in *The Dragon* are more familiar and place Zamyatin in the tradition of imaginative Russian satirists and story-tellers that includes Gogol and Bulgakov, both of whom reveal another side to their personality when they are writing stories (compare Bulgakov's novel *The White Guard* with his wild collection describing political pandemonium, *Diaboliad*). Zamyatin's stories are brilliant, but the odd thing is that we might never have heard the man's name if it hadn't been for the fact that a French version of *We* inspired Orwell to write *1984*. *We* appeared in the United States (and was praised there) in the late 1920s, but was never reprinted; it was not published in England—though Orwell offered to translate it for Faber & Faber in the 'forties—until just a few years ago. *The Dragon* is prefaced by a letter that Zamyatin wrote to Stalin, requesting permission travel to abroad. "Dear Yosif Vissarionovich," Zamyatin begins, and at one point he says,

> If circumstances should make it impossible (temporarily, I hope) for me to be a Russian writer, perhaps I shall be able, like the Pole Joseph Conrad, to become for a time an English writer, especially since I have already written about England in Russian. . . .

He left with the assistance of Gorki and settled in Paris where he spent the last six years of his life. But no *Lord Jim* or *Under Western Eyes* came out of his exile. He started a novel; his central character was Attila the Hun; he never finished it, and died in obscurity.

THE CHARACTERS in Cynthia Ozick's first collection of stories, *The Pagan Rabbi*[4] are uncommon, and though there is a category of fiction known as "the American Jewish novel", Mrs Ozick's Jewish characters would not be at ease in the company of the people who appear in the work of Malamud, Bellow, Roth and Co. This is to her credit, and it might go some way toward reviving what must be by now a flagging interest in a literary form made up exclusively of extended ethnic jokes and backhanded compliments. She writes of people and situations who are rarely if ever seen in American novels, and one is interested to know whether her own novel *Trust* had the same imaginative daring.

Isaac Kornfeld, the pagan rabbi of the title story, has hanged himself in a New York park. The narrator, his old friend, visits Kornfeld's widow, who produces her dead husband's notebook. She is upset—understandably: it emerges from the gouts of script on the pages that Kornfeld has been communing with nature—or rather, Nature—and, more than that, has had a number of nocturnal meetings with a charming little dryad. The rabbi is torn between scripture and sensuality, and his body, made light and airy under Pan's influence, regards his soul (personified by a dusty old man with his nose stuck in a book) as something futile. It can be seen as a serious philosophic effort, but ultimately it fails, partly because it depends so much upon classical fantasy, and mainly because it is insufficiently dramatized and unpersuasive as a story. "The Dock-Witch" has the same result: a beautiful idea which an excess of fantasy deflates.

In this one the narrator works for a shipping line; he meets and eventually spends the night with Undine (or Sylvia), a vulgar middle-aged sprite who at one point walks around the wharf area naked and carrying a lyre. When one has decided, hearing Undine claim that she sings in Phoenician, that the joke has gone far enough and is even becoming just the teeniest bit preposterous, one reads on to find Undine transformed into a wooden century-old figurehead on a sailing ship. Explanation? Well, the narrator might be crazy—craziness could account for Kornfeld's visitations, and craziness could explain the narrative careering out of control in "The Doctor's Wife." But this doesn't explain everything, nor do the heavily symbolic names. Though these stories are marvellously written, they shift their points of view so often they never arrive at a point of resolution.

Yet two of the stories are excellent in all ways. The first of these, "Envy; or, Yiddish in America", is a portrait of Edelshtein, a Yiddish poet whose special curse is to remain without a translator in a country where the only glory is in being translated into English. He is tenacious in his struggle to be recognised, but he is unknown and unwanted: people giggle and mutter at his

[3] *The Dragon*. By YEVGENY ZAMYATIN. Gollancz, £2.50.
[4] *The Pagan Rabbi*. By CYNTHIA OZICK. Secker & Warburg, £2.40.

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lectures and are bewildered by his recitations. "He was a rabbi who survived his whole congregation," and he is, credibly, the supreme Yiddishist, the last Jew. Mrs Ozick is at her best in describing Edelshtein's maniacal, self-consuming envy for Yankel Ostrover (who bears a passing resemblance to I. B. Singer), a short story writer who, ably translated from Yiddish to English, has won the admiration of everyone. Ostrover has a fleeting affair with Mireleh, Edelshtein's wife, and in spite of the fact that Edelshtein loathes Ostrover, he

> noticed with self-curiosity that he felt no jealousy whatever, but he thought himself obliged to throw a kitchen chair at Ostrover. Ostrover had very fine teeth, his own; the chair knocked off half a lateral incisor, and Edelshtein wept at the flaw. Immediately he led Ostrover to a dentist around the corner.

At one of Ostrover's hugely successful readings Edelshtein meets Hannah, and later in an epistolary dialogue with the young girl sums up his dilemma, which is the dilemma of "Jewish writing." He tries to persuade Hannah to be his translator and implies that in doing so she will redeem her generation. Hannah refuses for the understandable reason that she doesn't like the old man very much. Edelshtein's delirium at the end is amply justified, but not a wholly satisfactory conclusion to what is otherwise a wonderful and pointed tale. "Virility", her other superb story—this one about an internationally acclaimed poet who is a determined plagiarist (but with a twist: like turning Nabokov's story "A Forgotten Poet" inside-out)—confirms Mrs Ozick's skill and shows her to be a vigorous, sly and accomplished writer, who deserves a very wide audience.

WITH THE EXCEPTION of the title-piece, a novella (an indefinable length: this one is the same size as Mrs Ozick's "Envy"), none of the stories in Gabriel Fielding's collection *New Queens for Old*[5] can be regarded as "major" or "important", but each is written with integrity and enormous vitality. The vitality is a kind of boisterousness in "The Young Bloods" where Tallent, an Englishman, is bluntly angling for membership in a Dublin club. The story hinges on Irish nationalism, English clubbiness and mistimed gallantry; it depends for its cool finale on the near-blindness of an elderly member of the Drogheda Club. Like "Bravery", it depicts rashness and misunderstanding, though "Bravery"—which is really about varieties of weakness—is the more delicate of the two.

[5] *New Queens for Old.* By GABRIEL FIELDING. Hutchinson, £2.

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"New Queens for Old", set in present-day Egypt, is closely observed and moves with subtle grace which all but conceals some genuine viciousness. Henry Maude, an English millionaire, is on his annual visit to some Egyptian ruins, with his companion, Pixie, who is a distracted French girl, guided by Sameh Kahn, a moody civil servant, and a driver, Hamnet. It is in patches a bewildering story, but Mr Fielding's descriptive gift steadies the narrative. Here, for example, is the strange, altering desert light, as Maude's jeep travels through the emptiness.

> The parasols changed the shadow of the jeep as it ground along over the many-toned sands to the distant hills. The blue-purple shapes shifted from circles to ovals to lozenges as Hamnet negotiated dunes and rises that from the village had been quite invisible. The colours of the shadows changed too, blue-purple became for several moments a light luminous blue, the colour of the horizon sky just before dusk, that part of it which is cloud-free and clear, a tremulous azure which suggests the beginning of a headache, a pool of luminosity against the white sand. At instants . . . the shadows of their faces appeared briefly beneath the linear darkness of the parasol, the whole profiles elongated, pharaonic and distinguished, so that even Pixie whose face was short and modern became in shadow queenly and antique.

"Pharaonic", used more than once in the story, hints at what is to come, the arbitrary exercise of power, first in the casual dismissive behaviour of the rich man towards the Arabs, then a series of commands, by Maude, by Pixie, the wilful act of sex in the tomb and then a bloody settling of scores. The actions appear motiveless and random at first, but the journey has an imperial languor: the jeep holds an entire society. The trouble is that Maude is no pharoah, only a tycoon; Pixie is "queenly" for a short time, in the shifting desert light, and the story closes with Maude's attempt at an explanation which must prove futile.

Still, it is a fascinating idea, and it succeeds because Mr Fielding's portrayal of the "progressive" Arab, Kahn, is such an accurate and patient one. If he were just another upstart goatherd brooding in his burnous the story would have no force. As it is, Kahn's feelings—his cracked ambition, his reaction to foreigners and the "revolution", the tug of his different loyalties—are shown in their complexity; and the epicene and domineering Maude, commanding respect and then despising it, strains Kahn to the breaking point. It is Pixie who precipitates the disaster, but the story's excellence is a result of the interplay of the personalities of four separate persons—a considerable feat of imagination on Mr Fielding's part. It is a harrowing story without any of the conventionally harrowing story machinery.

The Definitive Hitler?

On a New German Biography — By KARL DIETRICH BRACHER

WERNER MASER has at last followed up his studies of the early history of Nazism and *Mein Kampf*[1] with a comprehensive biography of Hitler.[2] He states that "the life of Adolf Hitler can now be reconstructed without any gaps", to which his Munich publisher adds that this historical presentation of Hitler is now the definitive one.

We are dealing, then, with an unusual work, for while the flood of literature on National Socialism is now so great that it can scarcely be coped with, the number of reliable biographies of Hitler is remarkably small. Many points of detail—and still more questions of analysis and interpretation—have remained unresolved since Konrad Heiden published the first important contemporary account in 1936 and since Alan Bullock in 1952 published what is still the best overall study of the Hitler phenomenon.[3]

The initial motivating power of the contemporary chroniclers of Hitlerism derived from their struggle against the Nazi régime; and then their work turned into an account and an elucidation of the German lapse into barbarism. Every now and then the "demonisation of Hitler" favoured apologetic attempts to exculpate the course of German history.

Recently, in the shadow of the new re-ideologisation of political controversy, the fashionable flood of books about Fascism has

[1] Werner Maser, *Hitler's "Mein Kampf"*. Faber & Faber, London; Grove Press, New York (1970).
[2] *Adolf Hitler*. By WERNER MASER. Bechtle Verlag, Munich, DM 29.80.
[3] Alan Bullock, *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny* (1952, revised. ed., Penguin, 1968).

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offered summary and specious explanations which, whether they seek to account for the phenomenon of Hitlerism in psychological and intellectual terms or on the basis of plain "late-capitalistic" economics, appear equally open to question. They tend to lump together all right-wing dictatorial movements and the bourgeois-capitalist system under the general heading of "Fascism", blur important older historical insights into the specific social and national circumstances, and thrust the personal figure of Hitler into a shadowy background.

The shifts and changes in the assessment of Hitler's importance are, indeed, characteristic. They range between the extremes of complete demonisation and the tendency to regard him as little more than a straw in the wind of existing conditions, between the assertion (on the one hand) of Hitlerism as the charismatic totalitarianism of the all-powerful dictator, and (on the other hand) the theory of Fascism which holds that the leaders were simply the instrument of an oppressive system of monopoly capitalism intent only on its greed and profit.

In the twenty years since the appearance of Alan Bullock's classic work, this major problem of interpretation, together with many lesser ones, has remained unresolved. Alas, it is precisely this gap that Werner Maser's book fails to fill: it does not measure up to the requirements of a definitive biography. Maser's strength—his wealth of detail and his tireless probing of individual problems—is also his weakness.

First, Hitler's ancestry (250 forbears) and his childhood are elaborately reconstructed, and the legend of the half-Jewish origin of his (illegitimate) father is replaced by the hypothesis that Hitler's grandfather and his great-grandfather on his mother's side were identical—and that Adolf Hitler himself was the child of a liaison between his father, Alois Hitler, and the daughter of the latter's half-sister. Excessive in-breeding was certainly the hallmark of the "Hitler clan" in that wooded corner of Austria, but this does not help very much to illuminate or explain the phenomenon of Hitler.

The same applies to the far more important question of Hitler's education during the Linz and Vienna periods. By the use of additional information and complex argumentation Maser seeks to disprove all the existing versions; but the picture still remains wildly contradictory. At one moment Hitler's anti-Semitic convictions are related to the Linz years, and then they appear to have originated in Vienna; and the final conclusions are little more than one historian's hypotheses.

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INTERESTING THOUGH SOME of the newly discovered details are, they scarcely change the overall picture. Nor is Werner Maser able, by the use of the individual biographical method, to answer the basic question of how Hitler's personal concerns were transformed into a major ideological-political movement. To do so calls for political and sociological analysis, without which a biography of *Der Führer* can only be a series of incomplete fragments.

Maser proceeds by dividing his extensively researched material into special thematic sections, and he passes from one period to another almost without reference to contemporary events, by documenting Hitler as Artist and Architect, as a soldier for the *Reich*, as a Military Commander and a Strategist, as an Ideologue and, not least, as a "Sickly One." There is a goodly number of new and interesting details—on Hitler's attitude during the first World War, for example, his entry into politics in 1919, his relations with women, his ailments, his medicines and dietary problems. But the political correlations which any convincing assessment of his life requires, and which one looks for in the chapter entitled "*Stationen des Politikers und Staatsmannes*", are dismissed in a mere 12 pages with a superficial list of dates from 1919 to 1945. Instead we are given a detailed comparison between Napoleon and Hitler which exhausts itself in commonplaces. Whereas the youthful Napoleon appeared "intolerable" to his contemporaries, Hitler in the First War was always the "*guter Kamerad*": in 1919 to 1923 he was still a comradely campaigner, still in 1924 the "*guter Kamerad*", and only later did he come to take on "Napoleonic" characteristics.

THE TREATMENT of Hitler's "*geistiger Welt*" or intellectual background is as unsatisfactory as the delineation of his character. The piling up of material and the broad generalisations cannot disguise the fact that the intellectual and historical elements which alone can define his philosophy—the mix of social Darwinism, anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism, and Germanic *Kulturkritik*—remain largely conjectural. What actually influenced Hitler, and why, does not emerge in any clear and persuasive sense from this account. Hitler, the dictator, the war-leader, and the destroyer, almost vanishes—unlike the presentation in Bullock's work—behind the psychologising enquiry into his way of life, his personal weaknesses and scurrilities (women, food, whether he could stand corpses, his mental balance, and so on).

There is a vivid account of Hitler's death in Berlin and the burning of his body in the *Reichskanzlei*, but this again adds nothing to our understanding of the phenomenon of Hitler and twisted German nationalism. It remains a triumph of detailed reconstruction without context, a useful study for specialists, but lacking any deeper perspective. This major deficiency of the book is summed up with a disarming naivety in its concluding sentence:

> Not until it is possible for any German, from Cologne or Rostock, Hamburg or Schwerin, from West or East Berlin, to visit his burial-place will the ghost of Adolf Hitler, the trauma of the entire German people, be finally laid.

Does not Italian fascism still remain a problem, even though Mussolini's grave is accessible? How simple things would be if the most terrible, and at the same time most complex, affliction in our national history could be dispelled by the reunification of all Germany!

Undoubtedly Hitler's personality affords an important key to the understanding of German National Socialism, and Maser's book throws much interesting light on the personal factor. But something more than biographical de-mythologisation—and even in this Maser is not wholly successful—is needed to account for the almost unresisted barbarisation of a civilised, cultivated European society in the modern circumstances of our own time.

That Devilish, Thinning Art

THE FOURTH VOLUME of Edel's biography ended with James's new face. For the new century, he had shaved off his beard. Fifty-seven, he felt forty. He'd worked through his failure in the theatre, written a series of novels about abused children which—Edel's view—released him from the delicate shackles of the James family and from an old fear of erotic love, and he had come as close to this as he ever would. Now, in the fifth volume,[1] the massive little man, ensconced with five servants and a secretary-typist in his Rye home, respectful colleagues (Conrad, Wells, Crane, Ford) within easy—sometimes too easy—reach, keeps fit with bicycle rides and prepares to write the three densely refined novels of love's discovery, renunciation and acceptance. In 1904, after twenty-one years away, he returns to America, lectures on "the lesson of Balzac" to amazed audiences from Philadelphia to Los Angeles, and writes his marvellous analytic evocation of *The American*

[1] *Henry James: The Master (1901–1916)*. By LEON EDEL. Hart-Davis, London, £6.95; Lippincott, New York, $12.95.

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Scene; he works out his literary monument, the Balzacian New York edition, suffers its financial failure, and then, just after becoming an English citizen, dies in the middle of that "horrible, unspeakable, iniquitous" war which undid the society he had rendered and subtilised in fiction's most poetic labyrinth. On his death bed, mind peeling, James had dictated two coherent letters about the splendour of his plans, one of which he'd signed "Napoleone," the other with his own name. In Edel's view, he had long shared the bloody Corsican's glory hunger. Oddly enough, the physical resemblance—at least in the death masks—is remarkable.

For the twenty-one years he has devoted to this biography, Edel has worked against James's detestation of that "devilish" and "thinning" art of biography which "simplifies even while seeking to enrich." Hoping to control his biographic future, James had burned a mountain of papers. What counted for the higher consciousness did not exist as a man, only as "the monster and magician of a thousand masks . . . so generalised, so consummate and typical, so frankly amused with himself, that is with his art, with his power, with his theme, that it is as if he came to meet us more than his usual half-way." Such an illusion-dispensing monster cannot fool a biographer. An Edel will dig up another monster, the James whose flirtatiousness may have led Constance Woolson to kill herself, who, annoyed at a rutting cat, killed it with a blow of his stick, who fell in love with Hugh Walpole and who (according to Maugham—in Volume 4—and Spender—in Volume 5) turned down his gallant offer with "I can't. I can't."

The romantic artist has been famously hungry for attention and famously jealous of his privacy. The romantic biographer is professionally inured to his subject's desires and scientifically prepared to foil them. His biographic equipment sometimes includes self-deprecating humour. I once heard Edel recall a dream in which James reproached him for claiming that he—James—owned a certain piece of furniture; "You're wrong," refuted the dreaming biographer and flourished a receipt.

Edel needs more than receipts. James's warning about the biographic menace to an artist's work forces his biographer to include a self-defence. "James was prepared to accept the art of biography if it became 'a quest of imaginative experience.'" But an artist's "imaginative experience" either exists in his work, or is beyond transcription. The biographer's choice is to isolate characteristics, call them "figures in the carpet" and thus shrink the work toward its own skeleton, or to do what James tried in his own biographies, an artistic recreation, a portrait. Aware of this, Edel invites his critics (in the preface to this last volume) to consider his own artistry; it is only "proper for artists to write about artists."

A perilous invitation. But serious, and worth a look. Here is the would-be artist Edel typically at work introducing a chapter on James's most famous typist:

> When Theodora Bosanquet went that summer's day in 1907 to Miss Petherbridge's secretarial office, an employment agency, she had no notion that this would be one of the most eventful days of her life.

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She felt somewhat slack and headachey. She was disinclined to brave the noise of the tube, and took a bus to Conduit Street.

This is not quite "The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace," but close enough to make one sniff unintended burlesque. (If "that summer's day," "disinclined" and "headachey" are Miss Bosanquet's words, let's have the quotation marks.) Miss Bosanquet's "diary of that August day gives us a distinct picture," James's "grimy gardener" takes her luggage, she settles in, takes dictation, keeps her journal, and becomes "increasingly worshipful of the Master, yet it was not blind worship. She retained a strong sense of her own identity." Edel summarises the identity: "She was a true hand-maiden of the Master." In a long work, so much of which must be tied to documentation, insipidity of this sort may signal the biographer's relief at a moment of freedom. There's too much of it: James urges his brother to let his son stay in Paris, and Edel's contribution is, "Henry James was thinking of his own art-starved condition in Cambridge forty years earlier." So it goes. Then there is the Edelian prose with its coy allusiveness (Mrs Wharton discovering "new realities within the house of mirth") and poesy ("the latter in a letter"; "the pompously-embanked river"). Like many apparently faithful servants, Mr Edel robs the Master's larder; his moustache is smeared with Jamesian jam.

Yet, yet. Not a work of high art, but somehow a moving biography. The long volumes give a sense of James's days and evenings, of the years as James slows down, shuffles off his social armour, deepens and strengthens. Like many remarkable men, James evoked a responsive intelligence from those who talked to or about him. Conrad, Wells, Shaw and Mrs Wharton spar with or describe him brilliantly. Even Edel rises on occasion to a spare analysis of a novel or situation.

The initial question in his biography was, "Did nothing happen to Henry James except the writing of an extremely long shelf of books?" In my view,[a] James lived a good deal more intensely than most of us burgher adventurers; that is if living be depth of feeling, comprehension, sympathy and range of expression. James was a wonderful friend, who elicited strength and a sense of beauty and possibility from nearly all who knew him; and at an age when most turn into sentimental curmudgeons, he learned, worked and felt at the top of his powers.

No Boswell, Edel has discovered and assembled most of James's life stuff. I suppose he is James's ideal biographer: his assiduity is reined by a banality which preserves what James wanted to preserve, the irreducibility of his work.

Richard Stern

[a] Not that of the bear of Literary Commonsense, Philip Rahv (cf. his *New York Review of Books* review of Volume Five).

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What is Important

ANYONE not irremediably corrupted by "Structuralist" prejudice who reads Yves Velan's essay on Barthes and Edward W. Said's on Structuralism in John K. Simons's useful collection of essays on French criticism[1] will at once see why Jean-François Revel's book *On Proust*[2] is so refreshing. Intellectuals seem to need an ideology before which to prostrate themselves. With the collapse of the ideologies stemming from Jesus, Marx (not yet resuscitated in a musical) and Sartre, the void has been filled by bits of all three along with fricassee of Freud, slices of Saussure and faggots of Russian Formalism cooked according to recipes from Lévi-Strauss. Some of Revel's book is best understood as the product of his revulsion from the bad intellectual smell all this gives off. He writes of critics who use every book as a screen on which they project "a verbal film that is more or less identical in every case." He asks "what literary work of lasting interest has ever been the product of exclusively formal preoccupations?" and does not stay for a Structuralist answer. He ends his book by saying that the one fundamental condition for talking about an author is that "what is important to him must be important to you."

But while I share Revel's revulsion from Structuralism and appreciate his many penetrating remarks on Proust as anti-snob (rather than snob), as a keen relisher of the simple pleasures of life (rather than jaded sophisticate), as, like Montaigne, concerned with others just as much as with the "I", and as very different from Henry James, Musil, Svevo and Joyce, I cannot help noticing that some of his observations are undermined by his own requirement that what is important to Proust should be important to him. Above all Revel is wrong in scorning the "philosophical" element in Proust as derivative and unoriginal. A professional philosopher trained in the analytical tradition spontaneously remarked to me on first reading *Swann's Way*, "What a first-rate philosopher the man is!" When Proust himself makes it clear (*Swann's Way*, I, 113) how "the philosophic richness and beauty of the book" he was reading challenged him to appropriate it, he pointed to what would be a central feature of his own book. How would Revel account for the fact that philosophers as different as Santayana and John Wisdom have admired the philosophical qualities of Proust?

Space only allows me to draw attention to two philosophical problems with which Proust is obsessed in the concrete manner appropriate to the novelist. The first is the problem of the relations between the material objects perceptible to the senses and the "intentional" objects present only to the mind. Proust says that the novelist can substitute "immaterial sections" for the "opaque sections" of the physical world and set free in us in an hour joys and sorrows it would take us years to get to know. The second is the problem of "other minds." It is not just a case (as Revel suggests) of ignorance as to what others do, but of ignorance as to whether their varied acts emanate from a stable centre of consciousness (see *The Captive*, I, 81) and, if so, what they mean to it. We can never know these things immediately, but only by inference.

Both these philosophical obsessions link with Proust's treatment of love. Revel admires this and even connects it with Proust's philosophic preoccupations. This makes his underestimation of the importance of the latter explicable only on the assumption that he is overreacting against bad expositions of Proust's relation to philosophy.

E. B. Greenwood

[1] *Modern French Criticism: From Proust and Valéry to Structuralism*, Ed. by JOHN K. SIMON. University of Chicago Press, £5.65; $12.50.

[2] *On Proust*. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL. Trans. by MARTIN TURNELL. Hamish Hamilton, London, £2.50; Library Press, New York, $8.95.

Is and Was

AT 49, VERNON SCANNELL is perhaps a little young to be recalling his past in autobiographical terms, dividing his life into alternating "Then" and "Now" chapters, the former descriptive and the latter gleaning aphoristically the lessons of youth and of a varied and at first glance rich life.

Mr Scannell more than once justifies his book[1] by saying that the man he is bears little relation to the man he was except in name. He sees the act of writing autobiography as—to a degree—trying to find continuity between distinct identities. Possibly this is what makes this sometimes entertaining book so strangely unsatisfactory: that in tracing incidents—from Irish childhood, through a boxing career, military desertion, battle, etc. (in no chronological order)—Mr Scannell does not at the same time reveal his own maturing process towards his present identity. This anecdotal autobiography does not show the development of a poet, nor does it reveal a mature outlook—it shows the poet's journey through space and time externally.

We do watch Mr Scannell. He is busy attempting to clarify his response to experience, and in doing this he is the point we are asked to focus on; he is not focal in the way that, say, Graves is, assimilating experience into vision, revealing himself in the mode of expression as much as in what is expressed. There is a failure of irony, too—the humour is largely heavy-handed. And the first character we meet, the military intellectual and gentleman's gentleman, is observed—as are all the people Mr Scannell dislikes—not with ironic humanity, but with a scorn which is unpleasant. He fails, in his response to people, to experiences, to himself, to place them in a context where their full nature, their tragedy and comedy as well as their annoying quality to him, are visible.

The "Then" chapters are, nonetheless, very interesting reading. The style is not too self-conscious, and

[1] *The Tiger and the Rose: An autobiography*. By VERNON SCANNELL. Hamish Hamilton, £2.25.

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Mr Scannell's descriptive ability, especially in writing of the war and of his response to the birth and death of one of his children is excellent. One balks at the style in the "Now" chapters, with Mr Scannell, by his own confession usually writing in a hung-over state, handing out his opinions about public readings (he doesn't much like them), about "identity", and so forth; most sententious is his comparison of the state of hangover (this without irony or even wit) with St John of the Cross' Dark Night of the Soul. Throughout the "Now" passages, except at the end of the book, there is a forced heightening of style, a bringing into play of unnecessarily latinate vocabulary, of extended syntactical constructions which tend to weigh down Mr Scannell's lessons from life.

There is not enough of Scannell as a child; nor does he explore why he was more interested as a youth in boxing and poetry as modes of identity, not modes of expression. He does not assess the various psychological tensions which have led to his poetry, and though he points out the Georgian origins of his work, he goes no distance at all into his literary beliefs or—in depth—tastes.

Michael Schmidt

An orchid is an orchid

THE ISSUE of a sadly misconceived recipe, but beautifully served up. . . .[1] Paintings, drawings and poems by Sidney Nolan, and an introduction by Robert Melville. Mr Melville begins by telling us about the Cunégonde-like Mrs Fraser, shipwrecked and captured by Australian aborigines in 1836 (and the subject of a recent book by Michael Alexander, *Mrs Fraser On the Fatal Shore*), although we have it on the same authority that the Dark Lady of Mr Nolan's pseudo-haikus and drawings is a 20th-century Patroness of the Arts bearing some resemblance (but oh, how fall'n!) to Graves's White Goddess.

Sidney Nolan's contributions sink below and rise above the confused but sensational expectations thus aroused. The interleaved drawings, on architect's paper, are either childlike, as found in nurseries, or else like those of older and naughtier children, as found in lavatories. The rather tedious Australian in the Iron Mask makes several inexpressive appearances. For the most part the interleaved poems are the sort of vague mumbles (I could an I would) which pass as poems today: possibly they mean a lot to their author, for we are told that in this troika-composition Mr Nolan has offered "marvellous solutions to his own ambiguities", but he could have done something to make them mean more to us. My favourite is entitled "The lawyer":

He kissed his typist
on his knee
it broke his heart

[1] *Paradise Garden*. By SIDNEY NOLAN. R. Alistair McAlpine Publishing Ltd. Ordinary edition £20; signed £40; signed with an original drawing £150.

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he took up art,
it broke his heart again
along with many other men.

A charitable view would have it that all this smart easy rubbish is intended as a foil to the very striking paintings of (or based on) Australian wild flowers: as which it would be wholly unnecessary as well as doubtfully apt. Mr Melville has some portentous things to say about Art and its Inspiration. "A permanent erection is an effective symbol of creative vitality." Well, Renoir's famous remark meant something, but Mr Melville's reduces symbols and (which is more serious) art to the world of the music-hall comic. It casts floods of darkness visible all around. He is much nearer the mark when he describes the paintings as a bestiary of wild flowers, for they certainly have an animal feel about them. Shimmering yet substantial, spiky, tentacular, crustacean, vivid, fleshy or lean, predatory and intelligent, they are crawling off the pages. There are very few of them you would want to wear in your buttonhole.

Apart from that one just comment, which Mr Melville then spoils by endowing the paintings with "a kind of sexual eloquence" as if the language of flowers had shrunk to four-letter words, this is a book of which it can be said that the discerning will ignore every word in it.

D. J. Enright

World Within and Without

ANY BIOGRAPHER of Emily Brontë attempting to give a sense of a life and to interpret a destiny must feel some helplessness in view of the paucity of available first-hand material—only three letters and a few diary-notes surviving. Winifred Gérin possesses the advantage of already knowing intimately Emily's family, her home and her moors.[1] To secure her apprehension of the subject she has turned for her main document to the poems, Gondal and personal, which were the work of the ten years preceding *Wuthering Heights*. Even these remain tantalisingly cut off from the early writings and from what might have been produced between the completion of the novel in July 1846 and Emily's death in December 1848. As they stand, however, they show the growth of the poet and the emergence of the visionary. By the time she was twenty Emily Brontë had felt the presence of unusual powers which made sharp division of "the world within" and "the world without." If at the end she may be said to have willed her own death, this had in large part to do with the cessation of her visions, Mrs Gérin believes. The persuasiveness of such an argument is the greater owing to the biographer's readiness to admit of a combination of causes while adhering to her dominant idea. She considers the lowering effect Branwell's degraded condition had upon his sister's health and nerves, her grief for his suffering and his death, and her increasing dislike for the kind of intrusive publicity to which becoming an author had subjected her.

Perhaps the major significance of Mrs Gérin's biography lies in the understanding it affords us of how *Wuthering Heights* came to be written by a person like Emily Brontë. Once again the central approach is by way of the poetry. The novel is considered "the direct product of Emily's poetic experience, the child of Gondal, the repository of her philosophic thought." The force behind the Gondal poems was Gothic and Byronic, but the literary nature of their origin did not make them the less real to Emily. One of the main themes in this biography is that "for her there had never been . . . a separation between the imagined and the real life." Gondal was both a secret game and a way of life shared by the two younger girls when Charlotte went to school in 1831. They were still playing at Gondal in 1845. By comparing their diary-letters of 30 July of that year, Emily's 27th birthday, Mrs Gérin reveals an interesting difference. While Anne's drab and bitter experiences as a governess had robbed the Gondals of their convincingness so that they seemed no longer "in first-rate playing condition," Emily's experiences, because deliberately limited, had fostered their image and to her the Gondals "flourish bright as ever." So vivid was this derivative world that she continued throughout her life to render its features and its personages in her own writings.

Better than Gondal is the world of the moors. In one of her personal poems Emily speaks of turning from "old heroic traces," "paths of high morality," "forms of long-past history," turning even from "visions rising, legion after legion," to walk

Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain side.

Not surprisingly, some of the most moving moments in *Wuthering Heights* occur when, maddened by the conflict between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton, Catherine yearns for the freedom of her windswept moors. The quality of the language on such occasions is as pure and fresh as in the personal poems.

So much that made up Emily's daily experience, both the mundane and the essential, went to the shaping of her art. In contemplating her behaviour in the last few months of 1848 when she appeared to wish to die, her biographer might have ventured that she was attempting this time to "live" what she had already so passionately portrayed in *Wuthering Heights*—the will in Catherine and Heathcliff to determine their own deaths. But to ask for this is perhaps to ask for too much symmetry. Winifred Gérin has given form and consistency to Emily's development, and has explained her feelings more clearly, but one virtue of her biography is that in the process of doing these things she has diminished none of the subject's deeper and still elusive sources of being. Emily Brontë who wanted "nothing further here but our own hearts and liberty" would surely have appreciated this.

Shirley Chew

[1] *Emily Brontë: A Biography*. By WINIFRED GÉRIN. The Clarendon Press, £2.50.

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Star Followed Star

SUCH A SELECTION of Emily Brontë's poems[1] as Naomi Lewis has now given us has been wanted for years. Lovers of her poetry have been left for too long with no alternative to Hatfield's arid text, overburdened with variant readings and cross-references. Now the general reader can rejoice in this attractive volume, whose handy size, elegant binding, quality paper and type and delightful reproductions of original MSS and drawings—all for the price generally reserved for paperbacks—make it the perfect companion for the initiate and the uninitiate alike. Primarily addressed to the younger reader, there is no reason why the appeal of the present volume should be anything less than universal: so true it is that Emily Brontë's poetry has but to be read for its unique quality to be apparent.

In an admirable introduction, which includes a biographical summary, Naomi Lewis tells us just what that quality is. Mysterious and elusive—like Emily herself—full of haunting lines and unforgettable images, the poetry is shown both in relation to the writer's life, and to her intense imaginary existence in the kingdoms of Gondal and Gaaldine, those enchanted regions wherein ever since childhood she dwelt like a Byronic heroine, in indisputed exercise of her powers. No lack of scholarship informs this edition, but it is scholarship lightly worn. For the neophyte in Gondal lore, there are useful Notes relating the incidents here selected to the overall Gondal Plot; and for the personal poems, the relevant biographical circumstances are indicated.

Inevitably, readers will grieve over certain omissions in this selection (193 poems cannot be compressed into the space of 30), but the balance between Emily's varying styles—the purely visionary, the dramatic, the lyrical, the philosophical—has been very finely adjusted. All the key pieces are there: "To Imagination"—"My Comforter"—"The linnet in the rocky dells"—"O thy bright eyes"—"Silent is the House"—"Julian M. and A. G. Rochelle"—"No Coward Soul"—"Often rebuked". Were these all that remained of Emily Brontë's poems, we should be in no doubt of her transcendent genius.

SHE HAD A DARING MIND. M. Heger said of her that "She should have been a man—a great navigator. Her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old. . . ." To us, reading such a poem as No. 22 in this collection, M. Heger's assessment seems to fall short of the reality, so daring are the poet's flights, so undaunted her explorations beyond Time and Space—beyond the stars to the further side of the moon, in an ecstasy of spiritual union with the universe.

Thought followed thought—star followed star
Through boundless regions on,
While one sweet influence, near and far,
Thrilled through and proved us one. . . .

[1] *A Peculiar Music.* Poems by EMILY BRONTË, chosen and introduced by NAOMI LEWIS. The Bodley Head, £1.

Jean-François Revel

On Proust

"A provocative and intelligent book. . . . Nothing is more stimulating in a piece of literary criticism than the breaking of images."
Patrick Brogan, *Washington Post Book World*

"Full of insights. . . . Martin Turnell's translation is admirable." *TLS*

"Brilliant ideas . . . an engagingly honest, unsentimental work." *The Scotsman*

"A valuable book." **P. N. Firbank,** *The Listener*

"Revel is an intellectual polymath: political journalist, philosophy teacher, literary critic. His book on Proust is another outrageous attack on established positions . . . Revel's Proust, like Revel's America, is largely a country of the mind. But it is a good place (as are most places where Montaigne is respected) and a visit there will benefit English as well as French readers. . . ."
Francis Hope, *The Observer*

"If you are a Proustian you must have it. Not in a long time has 'Remembrance of Things Past' been approached with such refreshing freedom from cant, such originality of mind. The translation by Martin Turnell is fine. An altogether satisfactory work."
Cleveland Plain Dealer

"A critical bombshell . . . Revel has an admirable translator in Martin Turnell. . . ."
St. Louis Globe Democrat

"A fine example of a critical study. It is energetic and entertaining, but most importantly it illuminates. . . ."
Minneapolis Star

$8·95 *UK edition: Hamish Hamilton*

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Re-reading the old, the unforgettable favourites assembled here anew, one is struck with the modernity of Emily Brontë, her appeal for a growing generation that seeks to discover its truths undirected, unhampered by conventions, whether social or religious. For such a generation, Emily Brontë speaks a recognisable language: her chief qualities were truth and courage; her poetic vision was informed with an all-embracing love for life at all levels—whether of earth and air, or of animals and trees, and plants and flowers. There was in her a pantheist and a platonist; a mystic and a realist, a visionary and a keen observer of natural minutiae, visible and audible to her perception as to few others.

Thanks to this fresh opportunity for knowing the poems, the countless readers of *Wuthering Heights* will be able to see Emily Brontë in her true perspective at last, as visionary artist, whether writing in verse or prose.

Winifred Gérin

Something in the Air

THE OUTPUT of the E. M. Forster industry is already considerable and here we have yet another scholarly study[1] of *A Passage to India*. The aim of Dr Levine, who teaches at the University of Nebraska, is to make "this great novel" more meaningful to readers for whom Hindu philosophy and the outlook of the Anglo-Indian ruling caste are about equally remote, and such readers must today constitute the majority. So one may legitimately ask again, with the author, what really happened in the Marabar caves, what did their unfailing echo of "Boum!" signify, what abstractions flourished under the burning Indian sky, how truly drawn a Brahman is Godbole?

Having consulted nearly every primary and secondary source on Forster, Dr Levine seeks the answers. She traces connections between Forster's actual Indian journeys and passages from the novel and interprets the changes between the first two drafts of the novel and the final version, such as the greater centrality given to Mrs Moore. In her longest chapter, Dr Levine reports the views of the critics about *A Passage to India* point by point—what has been said by Lowes Dickinson and Lionel Trilling, what by N. C. Chaudhuri and D. J. Enright and others. These well-chosen quotations make *Creation and Criticism* a valuable reference book on E. M. Forster; but conversely, when Dr Levine then gives her own interpretation of the novel's symbolism and its picture of non-communication between races and individuals, one feels this ground has already been covered.

There is another point. Dr Levine's study sent me back to the novel itself and what I found surprising is the acuteness of Forster's political insights. After all, in 1923-4 British military and political rule in India appeared still unshaken, just a fact of life. Yet Forster shows on the contrary how brittle and anxious this rule had become so that his Anglo-Indians overreact hysterically to the slightest sign of "trouble." His Ronnie Heaslop, Miss Quested's unimaginative Public School fiancé, insists that there is a mysterious connection behind British troubles in India: "It's probably the Jews." This in 1924, when Hitler was still in the Landsberg prison—but Forster must have sensed something in the air. The way in which Dr Aziz, the excitable young Moslem doctor, swings between verbal euphoria and collapse before hostile reality has a curious likeness to recent Pakistani attitudes. And when in the final scene the two friends, Aziz and Fielding, the English liberal, feel that they cannot connect, not until they can meet as equals, because as yet their skin colours denote quite separate cultural worlds, this seems like a foreshadowing of the current rejection of white liberals by American black militants: here, too, the connection is not yet possible. *A Passage to India* may be a great novel, as Dr Levine says, or not, but it stands the test as a classical reflection of our century.

T. R. Fyvel

[1] *Creation and Criticism: A Passage to India.* By JUNE PERRY LEVINE. Chatto & Windus, £2.25.

Idioms

DOUGLAS DUNN'S first book, *Terry Street*, was the work of a poet with a wry humour and a gift for observation, a gift derived not so much from thought as from style, which added to these earlier poems an elegance that is absent from much contemporary poetry. But it is a gift that seems to have resisted development, and despite many felicities and despite an overriding seriousness of intention, the present volume comes as a disappointment.[1]

The dominant mood is one of nostalgia. But it is a nostalgia that is constantly broken into and overthrown by anxiety. Dunn gives voice to a wish to "live quietly, miles away," but at the same time he remains sadly aware of those aspects of modern existence that seem to remove the significance from a merely private life. One has the impression of a man interested primarily in his garden—praised in one of the better poems—but whose attention is constantly wandering away from this inadequate refuge to dwell on the lives of those more at home in the modern world. The attitude is understandable, and often expressed affectingly. Unfortunately, however, Dunn lacks a poetic idiom strong enough to control the intrusions of this alien world, or subject them to more powerful and more satisfying ideals. He merely mentions them obsessively, or else he tries to shrug them off with words that never quite sum them up in the dismissive way he intends. In a sense Dunn seems to be outstripped by his ambitions. The gentle irony of his style cannot combat the anguish and brutality of contemporary experience, and the attempt to translate his merely personal antipathy into something more humane and universal requires a quite different order of poetic accomplishment. This is nowhere more

[1] *The Happier Life.* By DOUGLAS DUNN. Faber, £1.50.

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apparent than in Dunn's occasional echoes of T. S. Eliot:

When the present beach generation
Has lost its tan, and pushing pens
In the back room of the supermarket,
Putting up with that perpetual winter
Called gainful employment
By government and moneylenders,
It will be time to see what they stood for,
Weighing regret against pleasure.

The tone and diction contain a strong reminiscence of Eliot. But the poem has none of Eliot's precision of thought: it therefore lacks the means to indicate anything beyond the nullity it attempts to describe. The resulting vision is incomplete almost to the point of being callow.

Dunn writes far more interestingly, and more genuinely, when he confines himself to the observation of particular scenes—as in the energetic "Morning Bedroom", and in the descriptions of domestic details, such as his house, his friend's room, his garden, his shirt "As if it had been a dead friend's/ Who only now is being missed and understood." Dunn achieves here an undeniable poignancy. The images which accumulate are all gentle, harmless and rather sad, and the ultimate effect is perhaps a little ephemeral. But a stronger and more thoughtful idiom can occasionally be heard: Dunn's poetry then in many ways echoes the rhythm and diction of Sylvia Plath, whose influence can be detected in what is undoubtedly the best poem in the present collection: "The Hour." If Dunn is unable to kill with irony the intruders that threaten his inner life, it is possible that he may continue in this vein, becoming more subjective, more allusive, and consequently more precise.

Roger Scruton

AUTHORS

Leo Rosten lives in New York City but visits (and resides in) London regularly since his student days at the L.S.E. He is the author (as "Leonard Q. Ross") of the famous H*y*m*a*n K*a*p*l*a*n books. Among his books are *The Joys of Yiddish* (1970) and *A Trumpet for Reason* (1971) W. H. Allen. His pioneering sociological study, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony* (1940), has recently been reprinted. His article in this issue is adapted from his *Treasury of Jewish Quotations*, soon to be published by McGraw-Hill. . . .

James Morris writes regularly for ENCOUNTER. Among his articles are "Out in Wyoming" (February 1972), "Anglo-Irish" (October 1970), "Eyre" (July 1970), "The Ionians" (January 1970), and "Stones of Empire" (October 1968). His books include *Pax Britannia* (1968), *Oxford* and *The Great Port* (both 1970). . . .

The inaugural Marsden Lecture was given by **Henry Miller** at the Royal Free Hospital in November 1971. . . .

David Holden is a foreign correspondent for the *Sunday Times* (London). His "South African Notebook" was published in the August 1970 ENCOUNTER. . . .

Peregrine Worsthorne is the author of *The Socialist Myth* (Cassell, London, and Weybright & Talley, New York, 1971), and is the Deputy Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph* in London. . . .

Henry Fairlie, who lives in Washington, D.C., will be writing a regular "American Chronicle" for ENCOUNTER. Among his articles are "The Practice of Puffers" (his much-quoted critique of Charles Reich, ENCOUNTER August 1971) and "Walter Bagehot" (March 1971). His book *The Life of Politics* was published by Methuen in 1968. . . .

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Day Trip To Zanzibar

By David Holden

A FEW MINUTES OUT from Dar es Salaam over the turquoise and cobalt sea, Zanzibar came into view low, green and cloud-capped. Half-a-dozen Chinese peered silently out of the windows of the little aircraft. They were in uniform: stiff, black hair crudely cut *en brosse*, slate-blue tunics a size too big, red-and-silver Mao buttons glittering in the sunshine. Expressionless, unspeaking, and aloof, they defied all curiosity.

In Dar the Chinese had become official heroes—builders of the Tan-Zam railway, fighters for freedom from imperialism and neo-colonialism, suppliers of succour to struggling peoples. But they kept a low profile. Unless you got up at six o'clock in the morning to catch them at the city cold stores buying truck loads of the best fish, meat, and vegetables to feed 14,000 Chinese workers somewhere up-country, you might never know they were there at all. Now here they were made flesh, yet they were no more knowable. There were, said my informants, a mere 300 or so on Zanzibar—doctors in the island's hospital and experts on the island's farms. Which were these? It was a measure of their strange uniformity that I could not tell. Inscrutably alike and alike inscrutable, they gave nothing away but their collective sense of being different: creatures from another world.

Behind the Chinese sat another group, as noisy as the first was silent, but equally—although more familiarly—uniformed. Blue-rinsed heads jostled at the perspex portholes for a better view, Bermuda shorts strained over well-fed haunches, important-looking cameras clicked and whirred.

"Mabel! Mabel! Look over here!"

"Oh, isn't that just beautiful?"

A dozen American tourists were capturing another day's sensations. Yesterday, the thundering herds of Serengeti. Tomorrow, no doubt, the restful beaches of Malindi. Today—well, today we were nearing land again and the cameras were levelled at creamy sandspits and mangrove islets set in rings of aquamarine. Blue rollers broke upon a long white beach, a palisade of coconut palms passed beneath us, tin roofs glistened among the green and suddenly the air strip was there, puddled with a passing rain squall, and we touched down in a plume of spray. The Chinese filed out first, still silent, still aloof. The Americans followed, chaffing each other loudly. Together, yet worlds apart, they lined up at the little immigration desk in bizarre conjunction. Already a gentle steam was rising from the tarmac; and overhead the ceiling fans whirled slowly, promising sultriness to come.

I PICKED UP Mohammed—or, rather, he picked up me—not long afterwards near the Zanzibar Hotel, a colonial establishment in the Arab style of high arches and narrow rooms that had plainly seen better days. Mohammed was not his real name, but in places like Zanzibar nowadays it is better not to name real names, especially if their owners are walking echoes of yesterday's golden age. That was certainly Mohammed's remaining role in life. Ingratiating with his aged, brown-toothed grin, he belonged to that class of Arab, Indian, and Persian traders whose ancestors had drifted into Zanzibar with the monsoon winds centuries ago, and whose grandfathers and great-grandfathers had prospered exceedingly under the rule of Arab Sultans and on the profits of Africa's slave trade. When the British put a stop to slavery, with their Navy and their Christian principles, Mohammed's class still flourished under the mantle of the Raj until, three-quarters of a century later, modern independence and revolution swept all their life away.

That was in 1964, when one of Africa's bloodier little *coups d'état* forced the last Sultan to decamp to a lodging house in Southsea and brought to power the Afro-Shirazi Party and its leader, Shaikh Karume—a former merchant seaman of uncertain origins and a hearty dislike of most people of Asian blood. Since then, Zanzibar in the eyes of the Western world had looked like an odd cross between Castro's Cuba and Duvalier's Haiti, as its government proclaimed socialism and equality on the one hand and dealt out a specifically African revenge upon history on the other. Mohammed, poor old fellow, was one of the many sons on whom the sins of the fathers had been thus visited. Before the end of the Sultanate there were probably thirty or forty thousand of his kind on Zanzibar island, including the cream of mercantile and governing society as well as the lowliest clerks and artisans. Now there was scarcely a tenth of that number. As I pottered through the silent alleys of the old bazaar, past a thousand closed

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doors left by departed shopkeepers, Mohammed at my side maintained a personal threnody for the passing of their world. He remembered with special pride, evidently, his youth in the first World War, when Zanzibar was still the focus of Europe's struggle for East Africa.

"Many man-of-war come here then, sir. English man-of-war, German man-of-war—*too* many! Big fighting they make. Bombard Zanzibar —bang-bang! *HMS Pegasus*—you know *HMS Pegasus?*—I remember she fight here with German man-of-war, and *HMS Pegasus* she sink. Many dead sir, oh, many dead!"

He contemplated the ancient mayhem with relish for a moment, grinning merrily, then pointed to a notice in blue-and-white enamel over a crumbling doorway. It looked like a relic from some British railway station of the 1900s and said in terms that only the Raj could have devised for such a setting: "LICENSED TO SELL LIQUOR

Africa's Offshore Island

ON 10 DECEMBER 1963, after 73 years of British protection, the island of Zanzibar with its satellite of Pemba was granted sovereign independence under a hereditary Arab Sultan as Head of State. Five weeks later the Sultan was overthrown by a popular uprising and Zanzibar was proclaimed a "People's Republic." It has contributed ever since rather more than its fair share to Africa's contemporary mythology of "Black Oppression" and "Communist Subversion."

The tone was set by the uprising itself. Led by the self-styled "General" John Okello (a Ugandan African of communist sympathies and a psychotic nature who had been among Cairo's African nationalist protégés in the 1950s), it was notorious for the savagery of its attack on Zanzibar's Arab and Asian ruling class. Within a few weeks an estimated ten thousand had either fled or been massacred by Okello's African followers. But Okello's command was brief. Lacking administrative ability or political organisation of his own he was quickly eased out by the Afro-Shirazi Party, a black amalgam of local African peasants, Marxist revolutionaries, and political thugs that had won a majority of votes (though not of seats) at a general election the previous year. The Party's leader, Shaikh Abeid Karume, was proclaimed President and under his direction Zanzibar moved at once towards internal dictatorship and friendship with the communist world. Western imperialism was denounced, most remaining British civil servants were expelled, and an American satellite-tracking station was closed down. Russian and Chinese technicians and military missions and East-German security police were invited in. Soon, it was argued that the island had become a major offshore base for communist subversion in Africa and in April 1964 President Julius Nyerere of (then) Tanganyika was induced to accept union with Zanzibar, forming the United Republic of Tanzania, with himself at the head and Karume as Vice-President. But although Nyerere tried thereafter to moderate Karume's excesses, he was never able to impose his power in Zanzibar, where Karume and the Afro-Shirazi Party remained supreme.

WHILE NYERERE proclaimed a "one-party democracy" with regular elections on the mainland, Karume intensified his island dictatorship and publicly declared there would be no elections in his lifetime. Where the Tanzanian President spoke often of the virtues of multi-racialism, his deputy frankly proclaimed an African ascendancy, directed at the remnants of the former non-African élites. In one notorious case of anti-Asian feeling in 1970, four members of Karume's Revolutionary Council forcibly married young Persian girls against the wishes of the girls and their parents and in defiance of an international outcry. Karume justified their action by accusing the Asians of discrimination. They had, he said, been ready enough to take African girls in the past, but never to let their own daughters marry African men. Now the boot was on the other foot. It stayed there—and in use. The four girls remained married, in spite of numerous representations for annulment, and Asians continued to be forced out of the island—sometimes being compelled to leave their children behind.

ECONOMICALLY, the effects of the exodus were severe, although the government claimed there had been a fair redistribution of wealth among the Zanzibar Africans. In the 19th century the island prospered on the Arab slave trade, but even with that abolished its famous trade in cloves and the expertise of the Asian commercial community maintained a high level of activity until 1964. Now Zanzibar still grows two-thirds of all the world's cloves, worth £8–10m. a year in hard currency earnings, but quality and marketing are said to have deteriorated. With a long-term loan from China of £5 million, however, as well as the help of Chinese farm experts, Karume's government set up state tobacco plantations and farms in an effort to diversify the island's crops and—pursuing its policies of totalist socialism—it took all trade into the hands of a State Trading Corporation. Only one important field was excluded from the Corporation's activities. Sophisticated foreign purchases of such items as expensive equipment and machinery in which Zanzibar officials had little experience, were made on the Government's behalf by the British Crown Agents—the only remaining link with the Imperial Raj.

On 7 April 1972, Karume was assassinated by a small group of his soldiers. It was just over eight years since he had come to power. The accompanying account of a recent visit to Zanzibar was written shortly before his death and may suggest, among other things, why murder overtook him.

D.H.

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BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 6 P.M. AND 10 P.M. TO BE CONSUMED ON OR OFF THE PREMISES."

It was a long time, by the look of things, since anyone within that doorway had consumed anything, let alone spirituous liquors, but the words set Mohammed off on another naval tack. "All the crews they come ashore here for drink, for women! Like party all time in Zanzibar. All bars full, all women dancing, fugging, like *big* party. All shops do good business, too," he added, with a plaintive glance around us at all the shops that no longer did any business at all. We strolled on between blank walls and closed doors while Mohammed continued to pour out his memories. *HMS Hyacinth, HMS Talbot, HMS Goliath,* the German cruiser *Koenigsberg* that had sunk dear old *Pegasus* and later was sunk in her turn—he knew (or said he had known) them all. Their captains, too, who had come ashore to play golf in those far-off days and had honoured the young Mohammed with their bags to carry: " 'Hello Mohammed'—they all know me, sir—'Hello Mohammed, you come for caddy?' Oh, yes sir, they all my friends. . . ."

As we walked, these naval reminiscences were punctuated by notes on the physical landmarks of a bygone age. Here, for instance, was the house of Tippu Tib, the great slave-trader who ran a private empire beyond Africa's great lakes in those days—still only just beyond living memory—before the British came. "Very big man, Tippu Tib," said Mohammed, looking solemn for once: "Very strong. Very rich." His house reared above us in the cramped street, narrow windows shuttered, carved wooden door firmly closed—an empty fortress of defeated power.

Down another street and round a corner was the Anglican Cathedral, a grey and uninspired-looking place that nevertheless symbolised the end of Tippu Tib's reign for, said Mohammed, in his telegraphic way, "English put up church, English put down slaves." In fact, as a deliberate gesture they had built the cathedral on the site of Zanzibar's old Slave Market and recorded their high purpose in a stained glass window: "*To the Glory of God and in Memory of Livingstone and other explorers, men good and brave, who to advance knowledge, set free the slave and hasten Christ's Kingdom in Africa, loved not their lives, even unto death. . . .*"

ON THE WATERFRONT, beside the white sand, was the house where many of these good and brave ones had stayed—the old British Consulate, now in the hands of the Zanzibar Wharfage Company. A plaque on an outer wall recorded that Speke, Burton, Grant, and Kirk had stayed there and that Livingstone's body had rested in the house on its way from Africa to a grave in Westminster Abbey. Faded pictures hung in the hall—old *P & O* liners with tall, black funnels, and distinguished Scottish mercantile gentlemen with mutton-chop whiskers and white hair. Overhead the fans whirled and a slight sea breeze blew through barred, but glassless, windows. I could see an Arab dhow sailing past, its lateen sail stretched like a gull's wing over the blue sea. Dark Indian faces smiled over old teak desks. They were glad to see an Englishman. Oh yes, very glad. Because here they did not often have the pleasure—very quiet now, you see. Not like London, sir, ha-ha. Not even—voices dropped to a whisper—like Zanzibar used to be.

That much was obvious as Mohammed and I went on. Everywhere the streets were silent and the doors closed. Magnificent Arab doors they were, eloquent of past wealth, with great brass elephant spikes in their panels and frames carved with symbolic fish and lotus flowers. Indian or Arab names were painted on the walls above.

MOTILAL'S BAZAAR.
MONJI'S CURIOS.
ABDULLAH'S BROTHERHOOD STORE.
PREMCHAND'S EMPORIUM.

"See," said Mohammed, stopping outside one of them. "When Princess Margaret come she go only in this shop. This *best* shop. Best silver, best ivory. Princess Margaret only like best." But the recipient of this unsolicited testimonial had departed like his brothers. "SILVER CURIO SHOP" said a board over the doorway, "*Prop. Shivshanker Kilyanji. Jewellery Silver Gems Ivory and Curio Merchant.*" In a little window a few old copper pots were thick with dust and dead flies. It was a long time since Her Royal Highness had been around.

Or, so it seemed, anyone else. We passed a house that Mohammed said had belonged to the Aga Khan, a massive edifice hung with ornate harem balconies where a hundred retainers and their families had once lived in splendour. "Only three old ladies now," he said. Nearby were the baths of a former Sultan's harem. "Every night the Sultan's ladies come here for bath, sir, very lovely." The door was locked, the brass bolts covered with verdigris, the plasterwork crumbling, the walls streaked with the algae of neglect.

Twice I caught sight of the Americans photographing each other and commenting on the heat in resonant voices. Once a black Mercedes drew up at the Post Office with a woman passenger, identified in hushed tones by Mohammed as the Chinese Consul's wife. Looking plump and motherly in white blouse and navy blue trousers she trotted briskly to the rows of mail-boxes in an alcove and returned with a sheaf of letters. There were a few policemen about in British-

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style khaki uniforms and an armed soldier, looking sweaty in a thick, blue woollen jumper, stood guard at the door of the only bank. A number of women in black robes from head to foot flapped their way about in plastic sandals. But the rest was silence—and the emptiness of a ghost town. A whole civilisation had fled.

EVEN THE FOOD MARKET was oddly subdued, although it lay only on the fringes of the old, deserted town and had attracted what looked like most of the remaining population. There were plenty of fish and vegetables on sale—rich, red tunny, huge grouper fish, tomatoes, bananas and sweet onions—but there were no busy, cajoling voices raised, no laughter and no anger. I never saw anywhere in Africa such a listless market crowd. Round one corner, though, I came upon a little throng pressing round the dark cubby hole of an open shop, with shopping bags and baskets laid in a neat row behind them down the middle of the street. Mohammed suddenly grew wary at the sight. "We not stay here, sir. Better not. Please, sir, this way, sir. . . ." and he tried to lead me away down a side-street. I asked him what was the matter. "Food, sir. They wait for beans. Very difficult buy food now, sir." He took me round another corner and pointed out two much bigger queues each fifty yards long or more. "Same here, sir. They wait for rice and sugar. Everybody hungry, *too* much wait. Better we not stay."

I sent him off alone for a few minutes while I confirmed his report. They were indeed queueing for rice, sugar, and beans—and for flour too. Scoops of each were being ladled into their shopping bags. As Mohammed had hinted, I was obviously not welcome at the meagre feast and I retreated under baleful eyes. But later I put together the story of how Karume had created shortage in the midst of apparent plenty. He was, it seemed, a great believer in "self-help" and had decreed that the people of Zanzibar should feed themselves. So, although there were £20 million in sterling to Zanzibar's account in the Moscow Narodny Bank in London, he had simply stopped nearly all food imports—and a good deal else besides. He did not actually say, "Let them eat cake," but he might as well have done, for the people of Zanzibar seemed not to share his faith in self-help. Instead of tilling their own fields to fill their own tables they were eating less and looking sullen. Rice, sugar, and flour had been rationed for months; and other bulk foods, like beans, had all but vanished from the market.

Mohammed looked relieved when I rejoined him and whispered that he was afraid I would be taken by the police, so we hurried off again to the innocence of the waterfront to savour a last instalment of his memoirs. It came at what he called the Beit al-Ajaib—the House of Wonders—next to the Sultan's old palace. The Palace, said Mohammed, was now the People's Palace, and used by the people's government. But the House of Wonders was empty and if I liked I might go inside. It was a vast, white, wedding-cake structure of wood and cast iron—probably the biggest building in Zanzibar—four tall stories high, each floor surrounded by a wide verandah and with a Mogul-style cupola on the roof. It had been built by the Sultan about the time Mohammed was born, I gathered, and he could remember when a man sat in the cupola day and night with a telescope to watch for ships setting course for the island, so that he could tell the Sultan and warn the port authorities and generally ensure a proper reception. But besides the little man in the cupola, said Mohammed, there had been bigger men below. "Many big men—generals, admirals. Ladies, too. All go there for see Sultan." He pointed out an open gate leading on to the ground-floor verandah and while he squatted in the shade of a tree, pleading weariness, I went inside to explore. A mighty door creaked as I put my weight against it and swung into the gloom of an enormous hall. The building was in the form of a covered courtyard, with the outer verandahs matched by inner wooden galleries and the rooms running round all four sides, enclosed between the two. I was standing, therefore, in a great well that rose the whole height of the structure—150 feet or more of echoing emptiness. On one side was a cobwebbed, antique lift that must, indeed, have been one of the wonders of Zanzibar in its day, and on another a wide wooden staircase tempted me upstairs. Room after room was empty, floor after floor deserted. The place could have held an army and had evidently once accommodated a government. Old work-schedules were still pinned to notice boards, faded newspaper photographs were stuck to cupboard doors and ancient blue books had been thrown into dusty corners. On the first floor the remains of a gilded hall suggested a Sultan's banquet chamber, where Mohammed's big men and their ladies might well have sat at table, mingling mess dress and white ties with gold-fringed *abas* and silk turbans, an Indian servant—no doubt—behind every chair. Wonders, indeed: but now the only living things left in the place were the jackdaws that cawed alarmedly at my appearance on the topmost verandah. "You like it?" Mohammed asked when I emerged again. "You like House of Wonders?" "House of ghosts," I replied, and he giggled sadly. "In Zanzibar," he said, "are many ghosts. *Too* many!"

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THAT AFTERNOON I left Mohammed behind and took a taxi into the country. There was no difficulty about this, but there were restrictions. Diplomats on the island (which meant the staffs of the five remaining consulates: Chinese, Russian, East German, American, and French, had to get special permission to travel anywhere more than five miles out of Zanzibar town and casual visitors like me were confined to a handful of established tourist routes to the beaches or the clove plantations. These restrictions had fuelled wild rumours, especially among some of the remaining Indians on the island who, out of an understandable mixture of fear and malice, were ready to believe anything of the island's régime as long as it was bad enough. The Chinese, they whispered, were building a naval base. Soon Mao's warships would be patrolling the Indian Ocean from safe haven in Zanzibar. They were probably training African guerrillas, too. "Who needs farm experts? Those men you saw on the aeroplane were soldiers, my friend. There are 30,000 of them at the other end of the island. . . ."

Well, one should not laugh too quickly. After all, when the slave trade was at its height a Swahili proverb said that if the pipes were played in Zanzibar people as far away as the African lakes would dance. Perhaps the Chinese thought they still might do so? Perhaps. But I am bound to say that I greatly doubt it. There are better centres of African subversion nowadays than an off-shore island; and if that was the Chinese game in Zanzibar they were uncommonly good at disguising any physical sign of it. Apart from the Chinese Consul's wife I never saw another Chinese face on the island—my half-dozen silent fellow-travellers vanished without trace as soon as we left the airport—and the only indication I saw of a naval base was a couple of ancient motor-torpedo boats of indefinite nationality bobbing at anchor near an army barracks off an otherwise deserted beach.

On the other hand, the farm experts—if that is what they really were—didn't seem to be making much headway either. There was obviously no lack of abundance or variety in the island's crops, but that seemed more a matter of nature's bounty than of man's endeavour. The steam heat evidently acted like a forcing house for a host of things: not just the famous cloves that seemed to run, in glittering groves, all over the island, or the coconut palms that towered over them in thousands, but limes and kapok trees, cashew nuts, and bananas, peppers, tomatoes, water melons and cassava, paw-paw and pineapple. It was, or could have been, a garden of Eden where surely no man need go hungry.

From time to time my driver stopped to pluck some scented morsel. A few cloves here, a bit of lemon grass there, some lime blossom, an hibiscus, a waxen frangipani. Soon I was awash in all the natural perfumes of the island. But I couldn't help noticing that the villagers we passed along the road were unsmiling and that, although many of them had a spread of cloves outside their huts to dry, lightening the steamy air with their pungent scent, a lot of the clove trees seemed actually to be dead or dying. When I tried to talk to people they turned away. When I asked my driver for an explanation of the dead clove trees he shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe the right people go away." Maybe. And maybe, in trying to force these people to help themselves, the Chinese—or Karume—had bitten off more than they could chew?

BACK IN TOWN I called on one of the last of the Indian shopkeepers, an ivory and antiques merchant plainly fallen on hard times. He seemed bewildered to find that he had survived so long when so many others had fallen by the wayside. Only two weeks earlier another large batch of shops had been closed down and 350 more Asian families had been given their marching orders.

"We live from day to day," he said. "They give me no licence, I have no security. The police will come tomorrow, perhaps. What can I do?"

One thing he couldn't do, evidently, was trade even though he kept his door open. The Americans had been in that morning looking for souvenirs and two of the ladies had bought some shells. But otherwise there was no business and anyway, he said, he had nothing worth selling. I poked about his shelves in the hope of proving him wrong, but they were a sad sight. A few postcards curled with age and heat. Some African wood carvings imported wholesale from Nairobi. A cupboard full of shells, some cheap coral necklaces, a few small and obviously mass-produced ivory elephants from India and two broken Victorian oil lamps. But among the debris I spotted a modest treasure: two miniature rosewater jars of Bohemian glass—the sort that once adorned aristocratic baths and harems all over the Ottoman and Arab world. They were not of any great beauty or distinction, but they were an unusual and agreeable amethyst colour and I bought them for £1 apiece. Morosely, the shopkeeper wrapped them up in old newspaper.

"They are the last, sir. No more. I had best ivory, best glass, in Zanzibar. Now—you see, sir." He gestured at the junk around him. "I am still here, but tomorrow I will be glad when they close me down. Then I will join my son in London, perhaps. He is chartered accountant. Perhaps you know him?"

To celebrate the sale we sat down on the front

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steps of the shop and chatted as the afternoon began to pass into evening. It was very quiet in the street and the shopkeeper leaned his chin on his walking stick and looked up and down with pain in his eyes.

"I was born here. My father was born here. My family been a hundred years in Zanzibar. I remember when this street was full, sir—full. Indians, Arabs, English—everybody. We were happy with the English. We played cricket." He looked at me wistfully and I murmured that the English must have done well to bring their mania for cricket even to Zanzibar. "Oh, yes sir! You know Cowasjee Dinshaw?" he demanded suddenly, eyes glistening, as though he might have been asking if I had ever seen the fabulous Ranjitsinhji play. But he was pointing across the road and down a side street, and I recognised the name of an old Parsee trading firm, famous once from Bombay to Aden, whose former offices I had passed in that direction during my morning tour with Mohammed. "A hundred and fifty men they had, sir. All Parsee, you know. They had the *best* team, the *best* team. Oh, very strong. . . ."

The sky was already yellow with the sun's descent when an old Ford Zephyr came round the corner and passed in front of the shop. Instantly the shopkeeper was on his feet, struggling to raise his stick in a half-salute. Two Africans walking past flattened themselves against the opposite wall with right hands snapped to their foreheads. I glimpsed a driver in a white shirt and a burly black figure in the back of the car in a grey, collarless tunic and a white skull-cap. The moment was over before I had properly grasped what was happening and I did not move from my seat, but when the shopkeeper sat down again he was grey and quivering.

"That's him," he whispered, mopping his face. "That's Karume."

"Do you do this every time you see him?" I asked.

"Oh, my God, yes! We have to. It's his law, you know."

DINNER AT THE ZANZIBAR HOTEL exceeded my worst expectations—a travesty even of British colonial cooking—and I strolled over afterwards to the rival establishment called the Africa House, pointed out to me by Mohammed in the morning as the former British club. A brass naval cannon stood outside the carved and spiked doorway, a memento of imperial power. Just inside was a printed greeting:

WELCOME TO OUR RESTAURANT
A nice cup of Tea.
Cool refreshing fruit drinks.
Variety of tasty Snacks.
For full meals we invite you to our Sumptuous Dining Hall upstairs Where you will be Served with

Table D'hote

at the following special rates:
Breakfast *Shs* 7
Lunch *Shs* 9
Dinner *Shs* 10
A well-stocked Bar is always at Your service.
WELCOME—WELCOME—WELCOME
TO
AFRICA HOUSE

By now I knew what to expect. The Sumptuous Dining Hall was empty, the well-stocked Bar abandoned. A full-size billiards table was uncovered as if for use, with balls in the pockets and cues on the walls, but it must have been an erratic game the invisible patrons played for the cues had been cut to half their normal length and their ends were splayed out like old shaving brushes.

There was no whisky, gin or spirits of any kind, so I ordered a beer and sat alone on the verandah waiting for whoever might come. An African looked in to inquire for cigarettes but was turned away empty-handed. Cigarettes, too, as I had heard, were among Karume's restricted imports, and the African looked unsurprised. Otherwise I had only the mosquitoes for company and when they began to bite I gave up the vigil and returned to the dark streets.

But here, strangely, there was sudden animation. A shop had opened and customers were passing in and out two, three and four at a time. The electric light blazed upon shelves and packing cases full of worldly temptations. Cherry Blossom shoe-polish and Libby's corned beef, Windolene and soap bars, margarine and tea-bags and a row of lovely bottles priced at £3 each which proved to be French Beaujolais and Chinese brandy. I asked the African behind the counter how he came to have such luxuries but he made no answer and a European customer explained in what seemed to be a Scandinavian accent. This was the state shop and these were state goods, imported by the government for those who could afford them. And who might they be? Mostly government employees, he said, and a few foreigners like him. He was a teacher, he said, in the local training-college. When I asked him how he was enjoying himself he smiled and said he liked skin diving.

On the waterfront, also, there was new activity. The lights were on in the People's Palace and I recognised the Ford Zephyr standing in the driveway. On the grass in front of the House of Wonders two or three hundred people were strolling or sitting, some playing cards by the light of street lamps, some chewing kebabs from little

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stalls, some drinking paw-paw juice, or roasting octopus over tiny charcoal fires. In the crowd I ran into one of the Indian clerks I had met that morning. "Welcome, sir." I asked him what was going on. "Nothing new, sir. Every night this is our meeting place. Nothing new." There were not so many people left, of course, and they were getting fewer every week, but my acquaintance found it pleasant there and didn't want to leave.

"Where would I go? This is my home. I am Zanzibar citizen, sir—and I think London is very cold, is it so?"

"But suppose you were forced to go?"

He looked away, stopped smiling. "Sir, I would not be happy to be leaving. You like paw-paw juice?"

We had one for the road. When I went back to bed in the Zanzibar Hotel I found an old copy of the British Travel and Holiday Association's *Guide to Hotels and Restaurants in Britain* among a pile of tattered magazines and pamphlets going back to 1962. I read myself to sleep with news of the Belle Vue in Tenby that offered bed and breakfast for 35 shillings with a vegetarian menu on demand, and the Continental Hotel at Mundesley-on-Sea which, for 72/6, actually ran to a night porter. They sounded lovely.

IN THE MORNING Mohammed was waiting for me, brown teeth bared in welcome. "What you like do today, sir?" He was crestfallen when I explained that I hadn't much time left and I wanted to see the new government housing estates. Not his cup of tea, I gathered, as he passed me over to a taxi-driver friend. But the housing estates were a necessary stop on the way to knowledge of contemporary Zanzibar for, by all accounts, they were the best (or at any rate the most obvious) of Karume's positive achievements. He had at least two such to his name—the provision of free education and free housing, both accomplished straightforwardly by decree. The free education for everyone already existed in theory, although as the flight of the Asians had removed most of the qualified teachers the practice was said to leave a good deal to be desired. A few lucky families, chosen by the Afro-Shirazi Party, had also got their free housing in new six-storey apartment blocks where their washing dangled domestically from the balconies and they paid only £2 a month for electricity and water. But most of the new apartments were still under construction, with acres of tin and tea-chest shanty-towns being bulldozed to make way for them around the edge of town. Nobody seemed sure who had designed them. Some said East German architects were responsible, others that Karume himself had drawn the plans, having swotted up a bit of architecture somewhere along his seaman's way. Certainly he had claimed responsibility for a plan to house the entire population of Zanzibar, and its satellite island of Pemba, in ten urban centres of the most modern design. The apartments were the first instalment of that super-plan.

From a distance they were impressive, at close quarters less so, and after half-an-hour at the site I had the gravest, layman's doubts whether any of them would stand for more than a few years. Most of the equipment in use was rudimentary and the workmanship looked disastrous. No doubt the fact that the labour was drafted had something to do with that: every man in the island was supposed to "give" two half-days of his time each week to the erection of these symbols of a brave new world and, *mutatis mutandis*, the results looked rather like those obtained by Fidel Castro when he sent bank managers and shop assistants to help harvest Cuba's sugar cane. For foundations, the gangs shovelled out by hand a few trenches about ten feet deep. Into these they tipped lumps of broken coral rock to form a base, and over the rock they poured a watery cement from an improvised chute of corrugated iron. There were no supporting piles driven into the ground, no visible reinforcement of any kind, not even elementary brick or stone walling to contain the rocky mixture—only the crumbling earth and a few more twisted sheets of corrugated iron. Upon that, it seemed, the flats were built: six cement floors suspended from walls of cinder block. It was probably a triumph of improvisation, and being no building man myself I may have been mistaken to feel some alarm at the process. But remembering a friend of mine who had once been a clerk of the works to a substantial contractor, and who would not have approved a bungalow built on such shifting sands, I thought I would have felt better myself inhabiting a tea-chest shanty. Come the earthquake, or the hurricane, there wouldn't be so far, or so much, to fall.

THE QUEUES were still forming again at the flour, rice, and sugar shops as I returned to the heart of town and the streets elsewhere were as empty as the day before. I said good morning to the Indian ivory merchant and he saluted me with his saddest smile. I looked in again at the Africa House, but there was still neither gin nor whisky at that well stocked Bar and no one at the billiards table. The secret of the shaving-brush game would for ever remain a mystery to me. Mohammed, though, had found some new customers. A small cruise ship had arrived from Mombasa on a regular fortnightly call and once more there were Bermuda-shorted backsides and

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blue-rinsed heads strolling the alleys of Zanzibar. I could hear Mohammed as I passed by: "This was house of Tippu Tib. Big man. Strong man. You know Tippu Tib?" The old world passeth and giveth place to new. . . .

At the Zanzibar Hotel I collected my overnight bag and set off for the airport, where the same little plane was waiting. As we climbed above the coconut palms and white breakers an hour later and turned towards Africa over the bright blue sea, I opened my bag and unwrapped the two rosewater jars I had bought the day before. They were dusty, but I rubbed them with my handkerchief and held them up to the sun. The amethyst glass glowed, clear as a jewel, but in the bottom of each jar I could see something loose. I tipped them up. Into the palm of my hand fell two black and wizened cloves. Their scent had gone but when I gave one of them a gingerly, experimental chew I could still catch a ghostly flavour.

INDEX TO VOLUME XXXVIII

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LETTERS

The Sexual Offences Bill

MAY I, as a Vice-President of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, add a note to the correspondence arising out of Lord Arran's article [ENCOUNTER, March]?

Dr E. J. Mishan, in replying to Mr R. N. Noyes [June], says he has no objection to further endeavours by homosexuals "to alleviate any residual disabilities, provided the means used are tactful and decent", which is decent of him. But if homosexuals go too far and try to legitimate homosexuality, to ask society, in his words, "to accept homosexual union as on a par, socially, with heterosexual union: to sanction homosexual marriage by Church and State" this would, he writes, "I believe, be repugnant to the great majority of people."

He brings no evidence to support this view of public opinion. But, in any case, given the change in the law, why is not the homosexual campaign for equality, even if this involves attempting to change public opinion, as decent as, for example, the highly decent campaign of women who demand equal pay for equal work? If there are emotional, social, and economic advantages in legalised homosexual marriage for homosexual citizens, why shouldn't these be campaigned for?

Dr Mishan says "Strong feelings are consistent with a wide range of pathological activity and, indeed, with a goodly number of quite vicious propensities." I should say, strong feelings are consistent with a wide range of healthy activity, and, indeed, with a goodly number of virtuous propensities. (Only I should never say "a goodly number".) Who is to say which of us is right?

"The reasoned case for legitimising homosexuality has yet to be made," says Dr Mishan. We are seeking to offer it. Meanwhile, the reasoned case for denying the legitimacy of homosexuality has also yet to be made. Alas, for Dr Mishan, he hasn't made it. All that he has produced is the old equation of Darwinian selection with the healthy norm, an argument that, carried to its logical conclusion, must equate civilisation with the jungle. Clearly he does not take this view, but only falls back upon it when reform appears to be going further than his prejudices can tolerate.

ANGUS WILSON

Bradfield St George,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

TO DEAL WITH the sniping first, Mr Wilson's remark that strong feelings are consistent with healthy and virtuous propensities (as well as unhealthy and vicious ones) *is* true—from which truth, however, it still does not follow that society should heed the recommendations of any faction or sect in proportion to the amount of feeling it claims to generate.

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As for his statement that "the old equation of Darwinian selection with the healthy norm" is "an argument which, carried to its logical conclusion, must equate civilisation with the jungle," the latter equation is not, perhaps, so offensive as he imagines. The process of natural selection on a biological level works over time toward viability based on a stable equilibrium. In the jungle there is, indeed, a tendency toward ecological stability, the product of a wide variety of interdependent species. When measured in biological time, civilised societies are a very recent experiment. Yet it is not too early to assert that their viability is also a product of natural selection, in that the integrative forces necessary for their progress are conditional upon the adoption of certain common institutions and beliefs. If this view of the matter is accepted, however, I do not see how Mr Wilson can derive from it any support for the "reform" he appears to be urging.

He points out, unnecessarily, that I adduce no evidence for the view that legitimisation of homosexual marriages would be "repugnant to the great majority of the people." Had I such evidence in my possession I would certainly have disclosed it. Since, without having conducted a public opinion poll on this engaging question, I yet believed the idea would be repugnant I candidly wrote that I *believed* it to be true. Let me add gratuitously that my prejudices are such that although I would like to believe that the greater body of my countrymen have sympathy with those afflicted by this common form of sexual pathology, I would also like to believe that they have too little relish of the homosexual act as to want to consecrate it with holy waters.

To turn now to the substantial issue, he does not succeed in taking the "reasoned case" for homosexual marriages any further than Mr Noyes. One cannot but appreciate the tacit simplicity of his appeal: if homosexuals ardently wish to marry each other, why not let them? Why not? Why should we blink at the thought of a future "gay" Mr and Mr President occupying the White House? Why, for that matter, should the Church not solemnise a marriage between mother and daughter, or between a man and his horse—provided, always, that the couple are agreeable to the arrangement?

Theory & the Free Press

SO I SAID to Jack Anderson, "Mr Anderson, I'd like to know whether you believe that I have the right to go through your files and to disclose their content in my newspaper column?" And Jack Anderson said, "No, I don't think you have that right because I am not a public official."

And I said, with that succinctness for which I am famous: "(a) *The Supreme Court, in its ruling on libel, has pretty much dismissed the distinction between a public official and a public figure;* (b) *there is no question about it that you, Mr Anderson, are a public figure; indeed* (c) *you are more influential than most public officials—so why, if you are entitled to see the files of Presidents and Senators and Cabinet Ministers, why am I not entitled to see your files?"*

To which Mr Anderson replies—lamely, I think—that okay, he'll show me his (files), if I'll show him mine. To which I reply: No, I won't let you see mine, but my position is consistent, because I don't assert the right to see the private files of the President. But yours is inconsistent because you assert the right to see theirs, while denying them the right to see yours.

I TRIED ANOTHER TACK. *Look, I said, I think you are right when you say that there is a conflict of interest implicit in the arrangement whereby the same man who classifies a document as confidential has the sole authority to declassify it, and I grant that that authority is usually exercised in a self-serving way. That is, public officials tend to release documents that make them look good, and suppress documents that make them look bad.*

Now: wouldn't you agree that by the same token there is a conflict of interests as regards your publication of secret documents? I mean, here you are telling us that you would not in fact give out secret documents that come to you if they imperil the national interest. But as a newspaper man and a sensationalist, aren't you naturally inclined to further your interest rather than your country's interest, even as you accuse the politicians of doing?

Well, said Mr Anderson, he would like it if a perfectly impartial tribunal (by the way, there is no such thing) were in charge of decisions about what documents should be kept secret and what documents should be classified.

Okay, I said, but why shouldn't there be a tribunal that passes on which of the documents that come into your possession should be publicised by you and which should be kept secret? Surely if a tribunal is appropriate to guard against self- serving tendencies of public officials, a tribunal is equally appropriate to guard against self-serving tendencies of newspapermen?

Well, said, Mr Anderson, if the government agrees to set up such a tribunal, I'd agree to go along. So said I: what is the reason for waiting for the government? Isn't it an approach toward what is desirable to set up a tribunal to pass on your own disclosures?

Dead end.

MR ANDERSON'S DIFFICULTY, *as a theorist, is that he cannot accost the question of public privacy except in terms of evil-doing. Now it is absolutely and obviously and unmistakably clear that public officials are very frequently engaged in such evil activity as hypocrisy, cynicism, dissimulation, the whole bit.*

Everybody who is running for President at this very moment is engaging in the kind of rhetoric that an under-educated mule would not take seriously. But it does not follow from this that a government official is required to send a copy of all his private

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But I am not sure if Mr Wilson appreciates as fully the simplicity of my own position which—if I may abbreviate it once more—is that in the development of the sciences the burden of proof has been traditionally placed on those who would depart from the contemporary body of beliefs. (For one can imagine the resulting chaos, to say nothing of the incalculable waste of time and energy involved, if every upstart hypothesis were to be regarded as valid until a proof, or a "reasoned case", had been given for *not* accepting it.) The development of social institutions has—until recently at least—followed this conservationist practice. Thus, on the Burkean presumption in favour of existing conventions and institutions, it is not required that any proposal for a radical break with custom and tradition be successfully opposed by "reasoned arguments." Quite the contrary. Unless cogent arguments are mustered in its support such a proposal will remain in limbo, along with a thousand others all ostensibly designed for the perfectibility of the human race.

Inasmuch then as heterosexual marriage as the only basis for family life has been a feature of all recorded civilisations, the onus of proof in an allegation that homosexual marriages confer "emotional, social, and economic advantages" on the peoples of the world, of this country at least, is plainly on those who allege it. If Messrs Noyes and Wilson are really hoping to persuade the non-homosexual majority of the manifold advantages to society of homosexual marriages, they have, I believe, a very long way to go. Or, to be candid again, I *hope* so.

E. J. MISHAN

London

papers to Jack Anderson, to do with as Anderson sees fit.

When he disclosed the minutes of the special White House group that faced the problem of the India-Pakistan war, Anderson justified himself by saying that there was a great discrepancy between what Henry Kissinger had said was official U.S. policy (namely, neutrality), and what the minutes actually disclosed was U.S. policy.

THE WHITE HOUSE DENIED *the discrepancy, whereupon Mr Anderson gave out the whole of the minutes. Now these included—as an example—the statement by one U.S. official talking at the round table with a dozen assistants of the President: "The Dept. of Agriculture says the price of vegetable oil is weakening and it would help us domestically . . . to ship oil to India." And, from the Chief of Naval Operations, "The Soviet military ambition in this exercise is to obtain permanent usage of the port of Visakhapatnam." Both of these expressions are, to put it formally, intimate: and their disclosure has nothing whatever to do with the hypocrisy imputed to Henry Kissinger.*

What is the theory of our right to hear such spontaneously expressed opinions?—which would simply not have been expressed in the first place if it were known that they would end on Jack Anderson's desk. The gentleman, in fact, has no theory of his right to the information. He has, merely, a squatter's right, and is better off forgetting the theory and confining himself to saying: I'll do it as long as I can get away with it. That is a theory of sorts.

William F. Buckley Jr.

in the NEW YORK POST

Clockwork Orange

CLOCKWORK ORANGES seem to have been too much for two capable reviewers in your June issue (pp. 38, 59). They can never have met the phrase *as queer as a clockwork orange*. It, and similar phrases, such as *as queer as a nine-bob note*, and *as queer as a left-handed corkscrew*, are slang phrases used to express oddity, particularly unnatural or perverse oddity, more particularly sexual perversity, and most particularly male homosexuality.

Mr Burgess's title thus provides an apt comment on his story, but characteristically, a comment cast in a semi-private language that makes it unavailable to a good many of his readers.

P. J. C. FIELD

University College of North Wales, Bangor

P. J. C. FIELD is perfectly right about the provenance of the title. I first heard the expression "as queer as a bleedin' clockwork orange" in an East End pub, and there was a time when the BBC used to put on Cockney plays that made use of that juicy trope. As for "semi-private language", can one really call Cockney that? Terms like *demotic* and *speech of the people* come more quickly to my mind. No slang or dialect is inaccessible to people who look or listen for it.

ANTHONY BURGESS

Rome

Johnson's Bramble

MR JOHN WAIN [ENCOUNTER, May] does not need to be told that a bramble is a prickly plant. I dare say not; but, revelling in his botanical knowledge, he has failed to notice what Dr Fleeman *is* telling him in the note he refers to. He first quotes Johnson's *Dictionary* to establish that "bramble" was not restricted to a single species of plant in Johnson's English, and proceeds to point out, what is not self-evident, that Johnson's "sleeps on brambles" is a variant on the proverbial "be (sit, stand) upon thorns". I think this is a genuine illumination of the poetry. At any rate, it is the main point of the note, to which the *Dictionary* quotation is only introductory.

J. C. MAXWELL

Balliol College, Oxford

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MY RESERVATIONS about Dr Fleeman's notes on *London* were based entirely on my belief that if a line of poetry refers to, or is in any way related to, something anterior to it, then we are missing *nuances* if we do not know what the anterior thing is. For this reason I expressed disappointment that Dr Fleeman had given us no information about the specific ways in which Johnson's poem relates itself to Juvenal's Third Satire, of which it is professedly an "imitation."

Apparently Mr Maxwell shares my belief that the reader should be alerted to *nuances* arising from the poet's use of anterior material. In fact he seems almost dementedly sensitive to this need, since he finds it essential to know that Johnson's line about the swaggering blade "who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man" is a variant on the proverb about being on thorns. This can only mean that he misses the Juvenal references even more than I do, and I expect to see him prowling round Oxford on the alert to snatch Dr Fleeman's edition of Johnson's poems out of people's hands, to save them from being deprived of "genuine illumination". But enough of this taradiddle.

JOHN WAIN

Oxford

Angell's "Illusion"

IN HIS Inaugural Lecture "Ethics and Politics" (ENCOUNTER, June) my old friend Maurice Cranston writes: "A man I once knew, Sir Norman Angell, had written a book called *The Great Illusion:* it was about war and it had been immensely popular. A short while after it was published the 1914 War broke out, and Norman Angell's great illusion became the great and terrible truth. But that didn't hinder the success of the book. Norman Angell was venerated as a sage, knighted, and awarded the Nobel Prize."

It seems, therefore, that Cranston now believes that Angell was arguing that it was a great illusion to think that a great war might occur. But that is not so. For in the "Synopsis" provided by the author in my first edition (London: Heinemann, 1910) I read of

> "the universally accepted theory that military and political power give a nation commercial and social advantages, that the wealth and prosperity of the defenceless nation are at the mercy of stronger nations, who may be tempted by such defencelessness to commit aggression . . . The author challenges this universal theory, and declares it to be based upon a pure optical illusion. He sets out to prove that military and political power give a nation no commercial advantage; that it is an economic impossibility for one nation to seize or destroy the wealth of another, or for one nation to enrich itself by subjugating another" (p. vii).

Certainly this is breathtaking rubbish. But the illusion of Norman Angell and the supposed illusion which he offered to dispel were not in fact what Cranston now misremembers them to have been.

ANTONY FLEW

University of Keele, Staffordshire

IT IS SURPRISING that one so perceptive and well informed as Maurice Cranston should repeat the canard about Norman Angell that dogged him all his life after he published *The Great Illusion.* Angell never contended that war was an illusion or, as his detractors thought he said, was impossible. Hence, *pace* Maurice Cranston, his contention was not refuted when war came. His argument was that gain from war, and in particular, gain from territorial expansion obtained by war, was an illusion. Debatable this no doubt was, but its treatment as the proposition of a popular ignoramus is a blot upon an otherwise admirable lecture.

A. A. SHENFIELD

London

I HAVE EVIDENTLY done the late Sir Norman Angell some injustice by the way I worded my reference to his *Great Illusion,* and I am grateful to Professor Flew and Mr Shenfield for giving me the opportunity to put the record right. I did not intend to suggest that Norman Angell had predicted that there would be no more war; what he claimed was that war was "futile" and "useless." Military power, he wrote, did not bring any advantage nor did victory in war bring any gain. He even denied that victorious powers could impose their ideals and institutions on defeated countries. The events of 1914 and after have plainly demonstrated the folly of these suggestions. Norman Angell asserted that the public was being deceived by a "great illusion." It is hard to read his book today without feeling that he himself was the victim of an even greater illusion.

MAURICE CRANSTON

University of London

European Amnesia

IT IS "odd" indeed, as *R* pointed out in his June column, that *Die Welt* and other German media, in celebrating the 60th birthday of Hanna Reitsch, the pilot, failed to mention her devotion to Adolf Hitler. But is such a *Verdrängung* so typically "European", something Britain will have to make an effort to understand once she has joined the Common Market?

Shortly after your June issue must have gone to print with *R*'s comment, the Duke of Windsor died. The obituaries in the British press and on the BBC were enormous in length; *The Times,* for example, gave it a full page in smallish print. But neither BBC Television nor the London dailies (with the single exception, as far as I know, of the *Evening Standard*), mentioned the visit which the Duke of Windsor paid to Hitler in October 1937, a rather spectacular event at the time. Neither was there reference to the rather friendly remarks which he subsequently made about leading Nazis.

Of course Hanna Reitsch's fanatical devotion to Hitler, and the Duke's aberrations after his abdication, are not on a par. Still, one wonders about this omission, as *R* did on that in *Die Welt:* "Is it fortuitous or deliberate?"

H. G. ALEXANDER

Der Spiegel, London

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Life & Letters Today

Brussels

EUROJARGON is on the way, and even the nationalistic French are admitting bastard words to their Brussels vocabulary like "le know-how," "le check-up," and "le fact-finding." The Germans have contributed an ugly and vital word, "junktim," which is Eurojargon for I-will-only-scratch-your-back-if-you-scratch-mine. The French contribution most widely used is "préalable," which means a prior condition. Hence before you start "le fact-finding" tour, the "préalable" may be "junktim."

SUNDAY TIMES

Hamburg

CRIME & PHILOLOGY: *Etymological studies have been conducted by German editors in order to establish exactly how the reference to the so-called "Baader-Meinhof" terrorists should be used in news-stories and headlines. Should they be called the "Baader-Meinhof Bande"? "Bande", according to the* Grossen Duden, *is "a group of like-minded persons who together engage in some evil undertaking. . . ." Or should they, in view of legal niceties, simply be called the "Baader-Meinhof Gruppe"? According to the* Frankfurter Rundschau, *the controversy over "Group" or "Gang" has become a controversial dividing line in German political journalism. If one says "Group" one is immediately suspected of having secret sympathies for Anarcho-Terrorism. The Springer Press, of course, always uses the term "Gang". This habit, it is felt by some editors, could lead to an atmosphere of "witch-hunting" rather than of an orderly pursuit of suspects on the run.* Die Welt *has denied that its usage of the word "Gang" is either "over-emotional" or legally improper, and has cited the appropriate passages in the law (No. 129, StGB). One editor has suggested a compromise by using a combination of phrase: "a group of criminals". . . .*

DER SPIEGEL

Birmingham

THE RED & THE BLACK: The title of Agatha Christie's play *Ten Little Niggers* **is being changed for Birmingham theatregoers—to avoid racial trouble.**

The Alexandra Theatre will bill it as *Ten Little Indians.*

DAILY MAIL

Majorca

POETIC JUSTICE: *Literary recognition has arrived at last for the poet Robert Graves—Spanish literary recognition, that is.*

Although he has lived on the island of Majorca for over 40 years (and written much of his work there) none of his books has been published in Spain. Now the Spanish, in something of a white-hot literary flush, have brought out his autobiography Goodbye To All That, *which appeared in Britain in 1929. "They've only just discovered me," said Graves, who is now 76, from Deya, the mountain village where he lives.*

What does he think of the translation? He is particularly amused by the interpretation of his words "Then I washed up."

He observed: "As Spanish men still never do 'women's things' like washing up, that has been translated as 'Then I washed my face'. . . ."

DAILY MAIL

London

LITTLE BLACK SAMBO: *We fail [writes Mrs Bridget Harris] to understand Brian Aldersen's attitude to the Teachers Against Racism campaign against* Little Black Sambo. *Had there been a book entitled "Little Jew Ikey" nobody in Britain today would fail to identify it as racist (whether they approved or disapproved).*

Further, Brian Aldersen, who we understand to be an expert on children's books, cannot by the same token be unaware of the 20-year-old campaign waged by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and progressive teachers' groups in the United States of America against Little Black Sambo, *which they hold to be "the epitome of white racism in children's literature." (United States Council on Interracial Books for Children.)*

Helen Bannerman's books have become both dangerous and obsolete in the multi-racial Britain of 1972 where people of goodwill are trying to foster respect *for black people amongst white children, in order to avoid the kind of terrible race tension and separatism which has occurred in the United States. The so-called "friendliness" which Aldersen says* Little Black Sambo *generates is in fact the friendliness of paternalism towards a "child race".*

THE TIMES

London

SATIRICAL BOOMERANG: A notable British figure is featured in the latest English-language edition of the Soviet weekly of world affairs, *New Times.* **Under the headings "Educators," it reports:**

"British psychologist Heinz Kiosk believes that criminals can be turned into useful citizens. 'If their aggression can be channelled into doing good work,' he says, 'they can do some marvellous things.' And so he proposed giving them jobs in schools.

" The only thing that worries him is that 'there would not be enough violent criminals to go round' and that 'only certain favoured schools' would be lucky enough to get their services. This fear, however, is unjustified. Just recently Home Minister Reginald Maudling said there were over 1,640,000 crimes committed in Britain last year."

"Dr Heinz Kiosk", of course, as readers of the distinguished satirist Peter Simple know—or at least hope—is so far, entirely fictitious.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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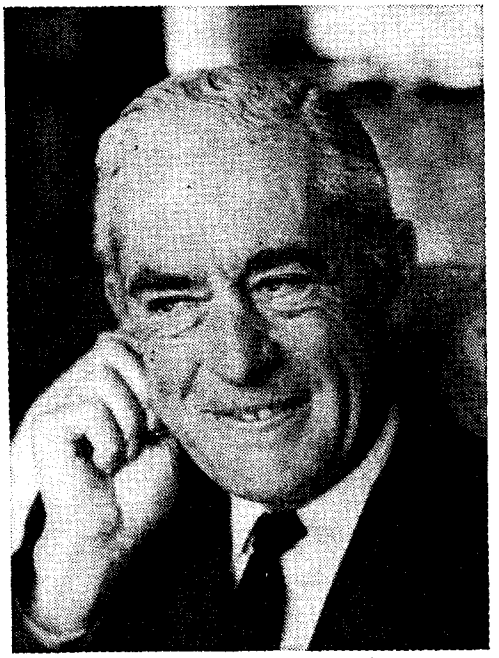
GORONWY REES

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS



"A well-written, considered and quite enthralling account of a relationship, intrinsically interesting and—much more than that—with great bearing on the inward discontents and conflicts of western society in our time . . . Rees describes Burgess to perfection, leaving nothing out; it is a classic piece of contemporary characterisation . . . In the light of Rees's brilliant portrayal, he was the first hippie, pretentiously illiterate, a revolutionary rentier, a libertarian conformist, a raggle-taggle dandy . . ."
Malcolm Muggeridge, *Esquire*

"The faintly sinister, slightly sordid tale is told with a suave and subtle brilliance which carries all before it . . . Scenes in this book sustain a fine peak of farce rarely excelled . . . Superbly told . . . The story deserves the over-used adjective unique." Michael Foot, *Evening Standard*

"The portrait of Guy Burgess is a triumph . . . Masterly . . . Even Evelyn Waugh's imagination did not dare to create such a monster of improbability . . . Compulsive reading." *TLS*

"Nowhere have I read a better exposure of 'the liberal illusion' of the 1930s, and its nemesis . . . I have found his book delightful to read. I admire his delicate sensitivity, his acuteness in general analysis, his beautiful style . . . As literature and as autobiography this book is unique: the record of a poor boy from the Celtic fringe who, coming to Oxford in the effervescent 1920s, and even to All Souls College, was uncorrupted by that heady draught, and can write."
Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Sunday Times*

"Beautifully told . . . Drunken, profligate, witty, charming, brilliant, dirty, deceitful, impossible Guy Burgess will now take his place in the gallery of immortal English eccentrics."
Philip Toynbee, *Observer*

"This beautifully written and extremely honest book." Constantine FitzGibbon, *Daily Telegraph*

"A brilliant success . . . Excellently composed . . . A brilliantly readable account of what is still a mystery . . . It is without doubt a minor masterpiece. I was reminded when I had finished it of the impression *Death in Venice* first made on me . . ." R. H. S. Crossman, *New Statesman*

"It splendidly describes a rogue elephant in the corridors of power . . . the underside, the rather more attractive alter ego, of James Bond." Isabel Quigly, *Spectator*

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